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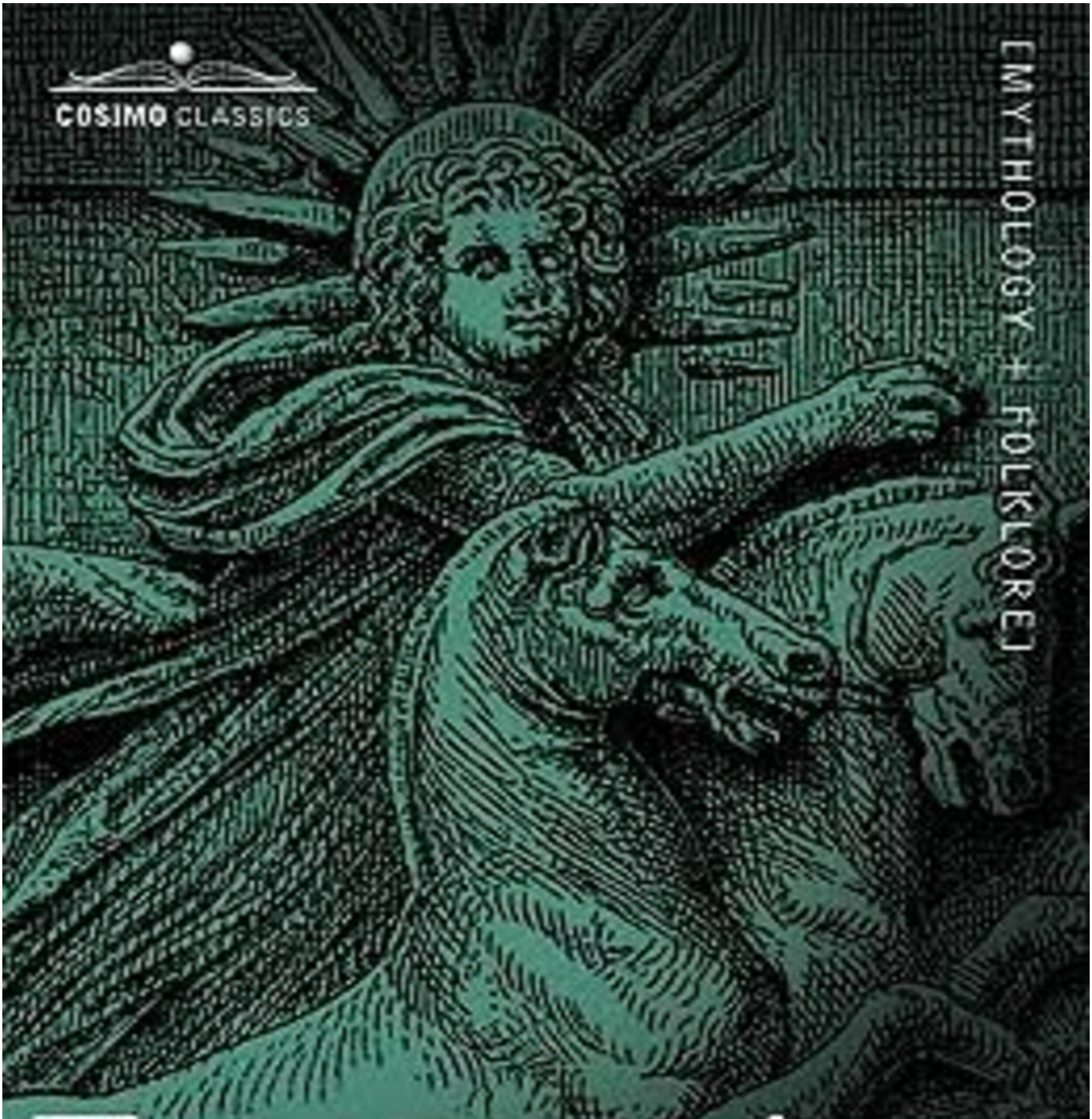

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JOSEPH WHELESS

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A Documented Record of the Foundations of the Christian Religion

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By Joseph Wheless

Is it God's Word?

FORGERY IN CHRISTIANITY

A Documented Record of the Foundations of the Christian Religion

BY JOSEPH WHELESS

Lately Major, Judge Advocate, U. S. A.; Associate Editor (in Section of Comparative Law) of American Bar Association Journal; Life Member of American Law Institute; etc.

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Dedicated

In grateful appreciation

TO

HENRY L. MENCKEN

DEAN OF AMERICAN LETTERS AND CRITICS

Theologian Emeritus of

a Treatise on the gods

FOREWORD

THE DISEASE AND THE CURE

> "ALL TRUTH is safe, and nothing else is safe; and he who keeps back the truth, or withholds it from men, from motives of expediency, is either a coward or a criminal, or both."
>
> MAX MÜLLER, *The Science of Religion*, p. 11.

> "The time has come for honest men to denounce false teachers and attack false gods."
>
> *Luther Burbank*

MAN IS A RELIGIOUS ANIMAL—is incurably religious," are commonplaces of clerical rhetoric. The priestly "Doctors of Divinity" who unctuously utter these pious—and apocryphal—platitudes—fathered by the wish,—urge the incurable state of mind—the religious neurosis—of their patients in proof of the divinely ordered nature of the malady, as patent of the necessity and importance of their "sacred science" of soul-cure, and the divine warrant for their continuance in perpetuity in their practice upon otherwise damned humanity.

It is the ghostly Doctors themselves, however, who by their quackeries have created the fiction of the disease, and who purposely keep the patient opiated and on the crutches of Faith, in order to "make their calling and election sure," and to perpetuate their thralling dominion over the mind and money of man. The first recorded priestly ban—by threat and fear of death—was on Nature's own Golden Specific for superstition and priestcraft,—the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: "Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii, 17.) A warden with a flaming sword was posted to guard the Tree: sword, and rack, and stake, civil and political outlawry, social and business ostracism and loss of living, odious *Odium Theologicum* and foul calumny, have

ever since been—so far as possible yet are the consecrated weapons of priestcraft to keep mankind ignorant and obedient to the priests. "No beast in nature is so implacable as an offended saint," is axiomatic of those who prate of loving their enemies. As *Jurgen* picturesquely says: "The largest lake in Hell is formed by the blood which the followers of the 'Prince of Peace' have shed in advancing his cause,"—and their selfish own,—as we shall abundantly see in the following pages.

FAITH IN A FATAL DECLINE

Howbeit, their pulpits and their press are lugubriously vocal with Jeremiads bewailing the ever-swelling tide of Unbelief in the land,—throughout Christendom. The Church statistics, notoriously padded after the Biblical model of the Censuses in the Wilderness, can claim at most some forty-odd millions of adherents—many of them by lip-service and non-paying (therefore negligible), and others many non-distinguished for piety or common honesty—out of the hundred and twenty-odd millions of our American population. The Reverend Rector of Trinity Church in New York City—(one of the wealthiest deadhand taxfree land monopolists in America)—thus bewails: "In America we are dealing with a country, the majority of whose inhabitants are pagans. . . . Only forty percent of the population acknowledges affiliation with any Church." (*N. Y. Times*, Mch. 15, 1930.) The ex-Secretary of the Home Missions Council of one of the great Churches bemoans: "There has been a tremendous revolution in the history of the Church. . . . The country church is waning and dying. . . . The revolution under our eyes *is found in the mode of thinking* of the whole country." (*N. Y. Times*, Jan. 8, 1930). An effective cause is found in the recent survey report of the Federal Council of Churches, to be in "the acceptance of a scientific view of life . . . general questioning of formerly revered authority . . . with absolute religious and ethical authority dethroned. . . . Women have made no comparable advance in participation in church affairs. . . . It can hardly be said that the church is an influential factor in the lives of the working classes." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune*, Jan. 31, 1930.) A curious confession of likely cause and effect,—in the mental calibre of the credent—is stated by the Reverend publicity counsel of a

national Church: "All sermons should be keyed to the mentality of a fifteen-year-old youth. . . . Half the people of the United States have the mentality of a fifteen-year-old youth. Most church-goers enjoyed the 'children's sermon' more than the one on religious philosophy. . . . The average man can carry only one idea at a time." (*Herald-Tribune*, Jan. 28, 1930.)—Verily, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

All Fools' Day seems to be a sort of New Year's for ecclesiastical statistics and general stock-taking of the faithful: annually at that time the very religious *Christian Herald* publishes its collect of figures on Church membership; the *Catholic Directory* emits its own; and the generality of Divines gives voice to holy Lamentations and pious warnings to the Church and to the ungodly. From this year's extensive crop a little sheaf is added, the matter being important to our purposes, and curiously instructive as depicting the accelerated downward tobogganing of the Faith. The Report of the *Christian Herald* discloses: "The total of communicants last year [1929] was 50,006,566," of which number it assigns a total of 18,051,680 to the *fourteen sects* of Catholic dis-Unity (*Herald-Tribune*, Apl. 26, 1930); though the figures of the *Catholic Directory* are 20,178,202. (*Ib.* Apl. 16, 1930). Under the alarming caption—"Warns Protestant Church it is Lagging," the Report of the Director of the Church Survey bemoans: "The Protestant Church in America is not keeping pace with the population. . . . American Protestantism increased from 7 in each 100 of the population in 1800 to 24 in each 100 of the population of 1900. During the past thirty years Protestantism has not increased its ratio of the population as much as one member more per hundred."—This is a very notable disclosure: that for a whole century the very vocal and intolerant Protestant population of this country has varied between 7% and 24% of the total population, and is today less than 25%:—yet this petty minority dingdongs that this is a "Christian country," and imposes its ludicrous medieval "Blue Laws" and tyrannous proscriptions—as will be noted—upon the great anti-clerical majority of the people. And further striking figures follow from the same source: "A study made in 1912—[*i. e.* before Woman Suffrage],—exclusively in cities, found two-thirds of the Protestant city membership consisted of

women. . . . There has been a steady proportionate decrease of interest in religion among women of the United States. . . . It was also found [in this present Survey] that only 18 percent of the country population is in Church membership, although it is customary to think of country people as highly religious.—[They, too, are becoming more educated.] In New York City, the Church population is reported equally divided among Protestants, Roman Catholics and Jews. Only *about eight percent* of the population are members of the Protestant churches,"—thus only some 24% of the people of New York City among all three much-divided sects. (*N. Y. Times*, May 5, 1930.) In a recent abusive set of letters by three True Believers of the same family name (one a Rev.), addressed to the Editor of a Metropolitan paper for writing sanely about the Tabooed Subject of Birth Control, this was denounced as an "insult to over 2,000,000" Faithful in this City. (*Herald-Tribune*, Apl. 12, 1930.) But the Faithful boast of their 444 churches in Greater New York: if each had the exaggerated membership of 1,000,—let the reader do his own figuring and note the result. And foreign immigration of the Faithful has been sadly curtailed of late by law.

The true significance to the Church of the great slump in its membership—and hence revenues, is crudely "given away" by the Very Rev. Episcopal Bishop of Long Island, lamenting like conditions in his Diocese: "The growth of population during the last decade on Long Island has been a challenge to the Church. . . . The Episcopal Bishop of the diocese advocated [in a public address] a *drive* to bring into the church the *wealthy residents* of Long Island." (*Herald-Tribune*, May 6, 1930.) The Most Rev. Episcopal superior of the last-lamenting has made a famous discovery, and with oracular gravity which evokes a smile he assigns its cause: "There are no great poets, painters, writers, nor musicians—[only great Mannikins of Bishops]—today, and the cause of this artistic deficiency can be found in the moderns' total disregard for religion." (Episc. Bishop of Manhattan: *Herald-Tribune*, Apl. 21, 1930.) And the Highly Rev. Bishop of the National Capital thus portentously, and truly, glooms: "There is an organized movement, world-wide in scope, to unsettle Christian ideals and Christian institutions, both in Russia and elsewhere" (*Ib.* May 13, 1930);—which, judging by the age-

old gigantic failure of both—as herein we shall see,—is not so much to be wondered.

So far as Russia is concerned—(and the fact and the reason for it apply as well to every other "Christian" country),—the reason is truly stated by the pious Editor of *Atlantis* in a Jeremiad of confession before the Institute of Citizenship just held in Atlanta: "For a thousand years, *ever since* Russia became a Christian country, and more especially in the last 200 years, when the Czar became the official head of the Church, the State religion in Russia was one of the *means whereby the Russian people were oppressed, exploited and kept in ignorance.* . . . The Russian people had a score to settle with the Church after the revolution, and they took full advantage of it" (*N. Y. Times*, Apl. 8, 1930), a like chance for which all Christendom is looking. The very religious Editor continues to confess: "It is useless to deny that the Church, in most instances, has lost its hold upon vast majorities of the people." (*Ibid.*) At the Christian Herald Institute of Religion held this year at Buck Hill Falls, Pa., a perfect symposium of Jeremiads bewailed Faith on the Toboggan: "Unless emphasis on elaborate creeds does not cease, we will deliver ourselves into the hands of the Humanists for *the defeat which we deserve.*" . . . "The Church is simply going to pieces in the small towns of the Middle West. . . . The paganization of rural America is going on so fast that if we wait for even the union of closely allied denominations to be accomplished, it will mean ruination." . . . "The greatest difficulty in effecting mergers of churches lies in *personalities and prejudices.*" (*Herald-Tribune*, May 15, 1930.) Thus today, after nearly two thousand years of the "sweetness and light" of our Divine Christian religion, "personalities and prejudices" among those taught to love even their enemies persist and keep the Fold of Christ divided into mutually-hating Flocks; precisely so that the olden Pagan sneer at the early Christians is perfectly befitting their successors today: "There is no wild beast so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith." (Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, ii, 31.)

To conclude this review of pregnant figures and confessions, two luminous revelations are in one day made of cause and effect. Says the eminent Rev. President of the National Bible Institute: ". . . because the Bible has ceased to have authority either in the pulpit

or in the pew. Decline in church attendance and decrease in church membership are almost invariably traceable to unbelief in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible,"—due to increasing knowledge of its true character, as herein revealed. (*Herald-Tribune,* May 26, 1930.) And the ghastly irony and joke of the whole huge bankruptcy of Faith is thus exposed by the egregious Pastor of a Brooklyn Baptist Flock, who images the Missionary "selling" the Faith to the benighted Heathen: " 'I have a religion here that will do you poor heathen a lot of good. Of course *it hasn't succeeded very well at home,* but we are sure it will do *you* a lot of good.' " (*Ibid.*) It's just like God told the Jews: You shan't sell the dead carcasses found by the way to the Chosen; "but thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayst sell it unto an alien"! (Deut. xiv, 21.) So the dead cats of Faith are flung out of the sanctuary as unfit for the Knowing, but are peddled to the ignorant heathen for whatever the refuse may bring of clerical revenue.

Like conditions exist in all priest-ridden lands. The Rt. Rev. Archbishop of Canterbury in his call for the decennial Lambeth Conference for 1930, at which over sixty of the Episcopal bishops of this country are to attend, sounds a fateful monition: "The *new knowledge of the Bible and still more of the universe in which we live* still confuses and bewilders the beliefs of many of our clergy and people. There are tendencies in the life of our Church which suggest the prevalence of forms of belief . . . which almost exclude belief in God the Father and God the Holy Spirit." (*Herald-Tribune,* Mch. 12, 1930.) Wails the Rev. Pyke to the annual Assembly of the National Council of Evangelical Churches of England: "A large part of England has lapsed into semi-heathenism; . . . our half-filled churches." (*Herald-Tribune,* Apl. 20, 1930.) Such creed-searchings and churchly lamentations over their moribund condition may be multiplied into volumes.

Some potent cure thus seems to be at work. This curative specific is simply increasing popular knowledge: "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free," is the Golden Recipe for the religious disorder. What Cicero said of the Pythian Oracles may as truly be applied to every form of priestcraft: "When men began to be less credulous, their power vanished."

Day by day, as knowledge increaseth and spreads amongst the people in the pews as well as among the parsons, does it become more difficult and embarrassing for the pulpiteers to "put over" their tales of myth and magic to the hearers of the Word. Even the clergy are becoming awakened to the stinging truth aimed at priests and the priest-taught by Prof. Shotwell: "Where we can understand, it is a moral crime to cherish the un-understood," and are beginning to feel the humiliation of their false position. A noted clerical educator, Dr. Reinold Niebuhr, professor of Christian Ethics in that hotbed of every heresy, the Union Theological Seminary, in his textbook suggestively entitled *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic*, makes this confession of recognized Dishonesty in the mass of clerical teaching and preaching: "As a teacher your only interest is to discover the truth. As a *preacher you must conserve other interests besides the truth.* It is your business to deal circumspectly with the whole religious inheritance lest the virtues [?] which are involved in the older traditions perish through your iconoclasm. *That is a formidable task and a harrassing one; for* one can never be quite sure *where pedagogical caution* ends AND DISHONESTY BEGINS"! (Quoted by Alva Johnston in *N. Y. Herald-Tribune*, Mch. 8, 1930.)

The great Church Father, Bishop St. Augustine (of whom more hereafter), was wise to the psychology of—at least—Pagan religion —the mode of its incipience and the manner of its age-long persistence. The priests and the priest-taught, he tells, instilled the virus of superstition into their victims when "small and weak," when they knew not to resist or healthily to react against the contaminating inoculation; "then, afterwards, it was necessary that succeeding generations should *preserve the traditions of their ancestors, drinking in this superstition with their mother's milk.*" (Augustine, *City of God*, xxii, 6.) Thinks one that this cunning *modus operandi* is confined only to Pagan priestcrafts and superstitions?

If, instead of the saintly Doctors of Hebrao-Christian Divinity, injecting their saving "opiate of the people" into the cradled babes of Christ, it were the abhorred Doctors of Mohammedan or Mormon Divinity who got to the cradles first,—those infant souls would all but surely be lost to the Christ, and in their God's tender mercy, as assured by the sainted Augustine, would spend eternity crawling on

the candent floors of Hell, playing with the "worm that never dies": hardly from the cradle to the grave could all the Christian purges for Sin and pills for Sal[i]vation of Soul, later administered, serve for effective catharsis of the venom of those Christianly-hated "superstitions, drunk in with their mother's milk."

This truth is strikingly stated in an eloquent period by Ingersoll, and stunningly confirmed and confessed by the syndicated Prophet of Protestantism below to be quoted. The former opens his classic *Why I Am an Agnostic*, with these trenchant words:

"For the most part we inherit our opinions. We are the heirs of habits and mental customs. Our beliefs, like the fashions of our garments, depend on where we were born. We are moulded and fashioned by our surroundings. Environment is a sculptor—a painter.

"If we had been born in Constantinople, the most of us would have said: 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.' If our parents had lived on the banks of the Ganges, we would have been worshippers of Siva, longing for the heaven of Nirvana.

"As a rule, children love their parents, believe what they teach, and take great pride in saying that the religion of mother is good enough for them. . . .

"The Scotch are Calvinists because their fathers were. The Irish are Catholics because their fathers were. The English are Episcopalians because their fathers were, and the Americans are divided into a hundred sects because their fathers were. . . . Children are sometimes superior to their parents, modify their ideas, change their customs, and arrive at different conclusions." (*Works*, iv, 5–6; cf. *Is It God's Word?* 2nd. ed. p. v.)

The truth thus uttered by the great Agnostic finds its confirmation curiously wrung from the lips of the Bellwether of would-be "reconciliationists" of primitive Superstition and modern Science. In a metropolitan newspaper carrying his syndicated "Daily Counsel" to the love-lorn and the misty-minded, a Virginia Believer puts to him challengingly the question direct: "Do you mean to imply that belief is largely a matter of environment, and if so, would *you* not have been as firm a follower of Mahomet as you are of Christ if you had been born of Mahometan parentage and brought up in that faith?" For once there was no chance for Conmanian suppleness of evasion, so the blunt and confusing truth is forced: Yes! "It is fairly

certain that had I been *cradled* in Mohametans [*sic*] I should now have been turning toward Mecca at the appointed hours"! (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* Oct. 29, 1929.) Thus the champion special pleader for the fast fading faith of Christ confesses away the divinely self-evident "truth" of his Christian faith, admits that it is the result not of independent thought and convincing proofs to his mind, but the inheritance of the cradle and the nursery,—that that towering intellect would today be bearing witness to the "revealed truth" of a false God and religion, if he had chanced to be "born that way"! Allah would to him—and to millions—be true and living God and Jehovah a crude barbarian myth, but for the accident of birth and teaching,—a reversal of the whole scheme of salvation! Thus the Cradle determines the Creed; it is the virus of the superstition-germ first injected which infects the credulity-center of the brain and colors too-oft through life the whole concept of "religious truth" in the mind of the patient.

The psychology of the priestly maxim—"*Disce primum quod credendum est*—Learn first what is to be believed," and the persistent virulence of the virus thus injected, is aptly signified by the Rev. Wenner, 83-year old Bellwether of Lutheranism in America, and for 61 years pastor of one of its oldest sheep-folds in New York City: "I do not think that time has produced many changes in the attitude of Lutheran worshippers,—because of the stable nature of the religious education we give the youth of our sect. From the *age of six onward* we instruct them in the tenets of our faith, and *they usually abide.*" (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* Oct. 10, 1929.)

The predilect precept of the Doctors of every brand of Divinity forever is: "Catch 'em in the cradle, and get 'em inoculated before they know." In the bib and rattle period, the childish brain is a soft, clean surface, "soft as wax to be moulded into vice," as His Holiness says: helpless it receives and retains whatever is first impressed or imposed upon it: true religion or false, Christ or Crishna or Santa Claus, Holy Ghost or the ghosts of Afric superstition. "Give us a child until it is seven, and we've got it cinched for life," is the ghoulish axiom of all the Faiths: "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,"—as of the heathen Nirvana. How godly a work is it to sear the thoughtless child mind with the

brand of Faith; how infamous and damnable to offer to the "immature" and inept youth in college freedom from the stigma of credulity! How crude and cruel for the Chinese to bind and cripple for life the feet of their girl children; how fiendish the custom of sundry savage tribes, ignorant of the "Light of the World," to clamp the infant heads between boards so as to produce the hideous deformity of skull so esthetically popular among them; but how pleasing to gods and priests to fetter the child mind in the bonds of Faith, and so to dwarf and deaden the mind's most precious faculty— Reason! "To succeed," eloquently said Ingersoll, "the theologians invade the cradle, the nursery. In the brain of innocence they plant the seeds of superstition. They pollute the minds and imaginations of children. They frighten the happy with threats of pain—they soothe the wretched with gilded lies. . . . All of these comforting and reasonable things are taught by the ministers in their pulpits—by teachers in Sunday schools and by parents at home. The children are victims. They are assaulted in the cradle—in their mother's arms. Then, the schoolmaster carries on the war against their natural sense, and all the books they read are filled with the same impossible truths. The poor children are helpless. The atmosphere they breathe is filled with lies —lies that mingled with their blood." (*Works*, iv, 10). This unholy cradle-robbing goes on with vehement zest. The Churches, the Federal Council of Churches, the Vicar of God and his adjutants, all ply amain the arts of enslaving the babe in the cradle, the child in the school. In the Encyclical of December 31, 1929, the right of the Church to the child is proclaimed as above that of parents and State; the secular public schools are damned, and the *prole* of the Faithful are forbidden to attend and mingle with the "irreligious" State pupils: "the frequenting of non-Catholic schools, namely, those which are open to Catholic and non-Catholic alike, is forbidden to Catholic children," as such a school is not "a fit place for Catholic students," who must be baited with "the supernatural." (*Current History*, Mch. 1930, p. 1091, *passim.*) Yet the banned and cursed Public Schools of New York City, forbidden to the Faithful child, the ecclesiastical City government fills with Faithful teachers for the purpose of "bootlegging" the forbidden supernaturalism into them; a work so widespread and active, that the Cardinal Archbishop of the City, address-

ing over 2000 of the Catholic Teachers Association, "praises their work of teaching faith in City Institutions." (*N. Y. Times*, Nov. 25, 1928.) And every rationalist effort to counteract such illegal propaganda and to free the schools from the pernicious influences of superstition, is denounced and opposed by the Bible bootleggers of every brand of Faith; and in the brave instance of Russia, a medieval orgy of prayer-assault on High Heaven is made, to counsel God what he ought to do to the Russians for their "godless" efforts to save the children of that Church-cursed land from the superstitions of priestcraft.

In an ironical letter to the English press, in which he "enters the lists against the British critics of Moscow's anti-clerical policy," George Bernard Shaw, writing under a transparent Russian pseudonym, says: "In Russia we take religious questions very seriously. We protect our children very carefully against proselytizers of our fantastic sects until they are old enough to make up their own minds. To us, it is inconceivable that a government would tolerate the inculcation upon helpless children of beliefs that will not stand the most strenuous scientific examination or in which the teachers themselves do not honestly believe. . . . We cannot understand why the so-called Articles of Religion, which have been described by one of the most learned and intellectually gifted of your churchmen as capable of being professed only by 'fools, bigots or liars,' are deliberately taught as divine truths in your schools. . . . Russia is setting an example of intellectual and moral integrity to the whole world, while England is filling its temples with traders, persecuting its clergy, and bringing up children to be scoffers to whom religion means nothing but hypocrisy and humbug." (*Herald-Tribune*, Apl. 7, 1930.)

Thus the Church enchains the Reason. The proudest boast today of the Church for its ex-Pagan Saint Augustine, is that: "as soon as a contradiction—[between his "philosophy" and his religious doctrines]—arises, he *never hesitates* to subordinate his philosophy to religion, *reason to faith*"! (*Cath. Encyc.* ii, 86.) So this great ex-Pagan Saint of the Church surrenders his reason to faith, and avers: "I would not believe the Gospels to be true, unless the authority of the Catholic Church constrained me"! (Augustine, *De Genesi.*)

Ingersoll, in one of his glowing, devastating periods of oratory, said: "Somebody ought to tell the truth about the Bible!" That I

have already essayed quite comprehensively to do. In my recent work, *Is It God's Word?* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1926, 2nd and 3rd Editions), I devote some five hundred pages to "An Exposition of the Fables and Mythology of the Bible and of the Impostures of Theology," as my thesis is defined in my sub-title. "A farrago of palpable nonsense," in the words of the Dean of American critics, is about all that remains of Holy Writ as the pretended "Word of God," as the result of that searching analysis.

That study was limited, in most part, to the sacred texts for the internal evidences, which themselves so abundantly afford, of their own falsity and primitive-minded fatuity. On the other phase of inquiry I there limited myself to the suggestive remark: "The gospels are all priestly forgeries over a century after their pretended dates" (p. 279; cf. p. 400), purposing then to complement the work by this sequel or companion volume, treating the frauds and forgeries of religion and the Church.

Taking up now more particularly the second phase of my subject, I here propose to treat of the inveterate forgeries, frauds, impostures, and mendacities of Priestcraft and its Theology. I shall be explicit and plain spoken, and unmistakably state my purpose and my proofs. For nearly two thousand years the priestcraft of Christendom, for purposes of domination by fear and greedy exploitation through imposture upon credulity, has consigned to earthly fire and sword, and to eternal damnation all who dared to dissent or to protest; the priestly word "miscreant," *misbeliever*, has become the synonym for everything foul and criminal in human nature. The day of reckoning and of repudiation is at hand; Priestcraft has here its destroying answer, in very plain and unafraid words.

This book is a grave indictment, impossible to be made or to be credited unless supported at every point by incontrovertible facts. These I promise to produce and array in due and devastating order.

THE INDICTMENT

I charge, and purpose to prove, from unimpeachable texts and historical records, and by authoritative clerical confessions, beyond the possibility of denial, evasion, or refutation:

1. That the Bible, in its every Book, and in the strictest legal and moral sense, is a huge forgery.

2. That every Book of the New Testament is a forgery of the Christian Church; and every significant passage in those Books, on which the fabric of the Church and its principal Dogmas are founded, is a further and conscious later forgery, wrought with definite fraudulent intent.

3. Especially, and specifically, that the "famous Petrine text"—"Upon this Rock I will build my church"—the cornerstone of the gigantic fabric of imposture,—and the other, "Go, teach all nations,"—were never uttered by the Jew Jesus, but are palpable and easily-proven late Church forgeries.

4. That the Christian Church, from its inception in the first little Jewish-Christian religious societies until it reached the apex of its temporal glory and moral degradation, was a vast and tireless Forgery-mill.

5. That the Church was founded upon, and through the Dark Ages of Faith has battened on—(yet languishes decadently upon)—monumental and petty forgeries and pious frauds, possible only because of its own shameless mendacity and through the crass ignorance and superstition of the sodden masses of its deluded votaries, purposely kept in that base condition for purposes of ecclesiastical graft and aggrandizement through conscious and most unconscionable imposture.

6. That every conceivable form of religious lie, fraud and imposture has ever been the work of Priests; and through all the history of the Christian Church, as through all human history, has been—and, so far as they have not been shamed out of it by skeptical ridicule and exposure, yet is, the age-long stock in trade and sole means of existence of the priests and ministers of all the religions.

7. That the clerical mind, which "reasons in chains," is, from its vicious and vacuous "education," and the special selfish interests of the priestly class, incapable either of the perception or the utterance of truth, in matters where the interests of priestcraft are concerned.

As the Catholic-Protestant-Skeptic Bayle, of seventeenth century fame, said: "I am most truly a Protestant; for I protest indifferently against all systems and all sects" of religious imposture.

My accusal, therefore, is not limited in purpose, scope or effect to any one Church or sect, but is aimed alike at all of the discordant factions of ancient Jewish and more modern Christian faith. For, as has been well said, "Faith is not knowledge, no more than that three is four, but eminently contained in it; so that he that knows, believes, and something more; but he that believes many times does not know—nay, if he doth barely and merely believe, he doth never know." The same critical cleric at another place said: "still less was it ever intended that men should so prostitute their reason, as to believe with infallible faith what they are unable to prove with infallible arguments." (Chillingworth, *Religion of Protestants*, pp. 66, 412.) With infallible facts I purpose to blast the false pretenses of Priest-forged Faith.

It is matter of fact, that for some 1500 years of this Era there was but one "True Church" of Christ; and that Church claims with conscious pride the origin and authorship of all the New Testament Books, out of its own Holy bosom, by its own canonized Saints. The New Testament Books are, therefore, distinctively Catholic documents. That Church, therefore,—if these its credentials and documents are forgeries,—as from its own records I shall prove—itself forged all the Books of the New Testament and all the documents of religious dogma and propaganda the forgery of which shall be proved in this book, and did itself perpetrate all the pious frauds herein revealed, and is their chief beneficiary. All the other Christian sects, however, are sprung or severed from the original One True Church;—"all other forms of the Christian religion . . . originated by secession from the True Church, . . . and their founders . . . were externally members of the Church." (*CE.* vii, 367.) All these Protestant sects, therefore, with full knowledge of the guilty facts and partakers in the frauds, found their claim to Divinity—and priestly emoluments—upon and through those tainted titles, and thus yet fully share the guilt as accomplices after the fact. The "Reformed" Sects, on breaking away from the old Monopoly of Forgery, appropriated the least clumsy and more plausible of the pious Counterfeit of Christianity, and for the centuries since have industriously and knowingly been engaged in passing the stolen counterfeit upon their own unsuspecting flocks; they are therefore equally guilty with the original Forgers of the Faith.

FOREWORD

OUTLINE OF CASE AND PROOFS

The proofs of my indictment are marvellously easy. They are to be found in amplest store of history and accredited ecclesiastic authorities, and in abounding incautious admissions made by the accredited spokesmen of the Accused: upon these I shall freely and fully draw for complete proofs of my every specification. These damning things of the Church, scattered through many clerical volumes and concealed in many archives, are not well known to the pious or preoccupied layman. My task is simply to bring together the documentary proofs and expose them before the astonished eyes of the modern reader; that is the prime merit of my work. To accomplish this purpose with unimpeachable certitude, I need and make no apology for the liberal use of quotation marks in presenting the ensuing startling array of accusations and confessions; to be followed by the plenary proofs.

As in the judicial process, I shall, before proceeding to the concrete proofs, define first the crime charged, and outline the scope of the evidence to be presented. I shall first make a *prima facie* justification of the charges, by citing a few generalities of confession of guilt, with corroborations by weighty supporting authorities, and thus create the proper "atmosphere" for the appreciation of the facts. Then shall come the shaming proofs in astounding detail.

FORGERY DEFINED

Forgery, in legal and moral sense, is the utterance or publication, with intent to deceive or defraud, or to gain some advantage, of a false document, put out by one person in the name of and as the genuine work of another, who did not execute it, or the subsequent alteration of a genuine document by one who did not execute the original. This species of falsification extends alike to all classes of writings, promissory notes, the coin or currency of the realm, to any legal or private document, or to a book. All are counterfeit or forged if not authentic and untampered.

A definition by a high ecclesiastical authority may appropriately be cited, as it thoroughly defines the chronic clerical crime. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* thus defines the crime:

"Forgery (Lat. *falsum*) differs very slightly from fraud. It consists in the deliberate untruthfulness of an assertion, or in the deceitful presentation of an object, and is based on an intention to deceive and to injure while using the externals of honesty. Forgery is truly a falsehood and is a fraud, but it is something more. . . . A category consists in *making use of such forgery, and is equivalent to forgery proper.* . . . The Canonical legislation [dealt principally with] the production of absolutely false documents and the alteration of authentic . . . for the sake of certain advantages. . . .

"Canon law connects forgery and the use of forged documents, on the presumption that *he who would make use of such documents must be either the author or instigator of the forgery.* In canon law forgery consists not only in the fabrication or substitution of an entirely false document, but even by partial substitution, or by any alteration affecting the sense and bearing of an authentic document or any substantial point, such as names, dates, signature, seal, favour granted, by erasure, by scratching out or writing one word over another, and the like." (*Catholic Encyclopedia,* vi, 135, 136.)

Under every phase and phrase of this its own clerico-legal definition, the Church is guilty,—is most guilty.

A "beginning of miracles" of confession of ecclesiastical guilt of forgery of Church documents is made in the same above article by the *Encyclopedia,*—very many others will follow in due course from the same source:

"Substitution of false documents and tampering with genuine ones was quite a trade in the Middle Ages. Innocent III (1198) points out nine species of forgery [of ecclesiastical records] which had come under his notice." (*CE.* vi, 136.)

But such frauds of the Church were not confined to the Middle Ages; they begin even with the beginning of the Church and infest every period of its history for fifteen hundred years and defile nearly every document, both of "Scriptures" and of Church aggrandizement. As truly said by Collins, in his celebrated *Discourse of Free Thinking:*

"In short, *these frauds are very common in all books which are published by priests or priestly men.* . . . For it is certain they may plead the authority of the Fathers for Forgery, Corruption and mangling of Authors, with more reason than for any of their Articles of Faith." (p. 96.)

Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea, the great "Father of Church History" (324 A. D.) whom Niebuhr terms "a very dishonest writer,"—of which we shall see many notable instances,—says this: "But it is not our place to describe the sad misfortunes which finally came upon [the Christians], as we do not think it proper, moreover, to record their divisions and unnatural conduct to each other before the persecution —[by Diocletian, 305 A. D.]. Wherefore we have decided *to relate nothing concerning them except* things in which we can vindicate the Divine judgment. . . . But we shall introduce into this history in general *only those events* which may be useful first to ourselves and afterwards to posterity." (*Ecclesiastical History*, viii, 2; *N&PNF*. i, 323–324.)

Eusebius himself fraudulently "subscribed to the [Trinitarian] Creed formed by the Council of Nicæa, but making no secret, in the letter which he wrote to his own Church, of the *non-natural sense* in which he accepted it." (*Cath. Encyc.* v, 619.) As St. Jerome says, "Eusebius is the most open champion of the Arian heresy," which denies the Trinity. (Jerome, *Epist.* 84, 2; *N&PNF*. vi, 176.) Bishop Eusebius, as we shall see, was one of the most prolific forgers and liars of his age of the Church, and a great romancer; in his hair-raising histories of the holy Martyrs, he assures us "that on some occasions the bodies of the martyrs who had been devoured by wild beasts, upon the beasts being strangled, were found alive in their stomachs, even after having been fully digested"! (quoted, Gibbon, *History*, Ch. 37; Lardner, iv, p. 91; *Diegesis*, p. 272). To such an extent had the "pious frauds of the theologians been thus early systematized and raised to the dignity of a regular doctrine," that Bishop Eusebius, "in one of the most learned and elaborate works that antiquity has left us, the Thirty-second Chapter of the Twelfth Book of his *Evangelical Preparation*, bears for its title this scandalous proposition: 'How it may be Lawful and Fitting to use Falsehood as a Medicine, and for the Benefit of those who Want to be Deceived' "—(quoting the Greek title; Gibbon, *Vindication*, p. 76).

St. John Chrysostom, the "Golden Mouthed," in his work *On the Priesthood*, has a curious panygeric on the clerical habit of telling lies: "Great is the force of deceit! provided it is not excited by a treacherous intention." (*Comm. on I Cor. ix, 19; Diegesis*, p. 309.) Chrysostom

was one of the Greek Fathers of the Church, concerning whom Dr. (later Cardinal) Newman thus apologetically spoke: "The Greek Fathers thought that, when there was a *justa causa, an untruth need not be a lie.* . . . Now, as to the just cause, . . . the Greek Fathers make them such as these—self-defense, charity, *zeal for God's honour*, and the like." (Newman, *Apology for His Life*, Appendix G, p. 345–6.) He says nothing of his favorites, the Latin Fathers; but we shall hear them described, and amply see them at work lying in their zeal for God's honor, and to their own dishonor.

The Great Latin Father St. Jerome (c. 340–420), who made the celebrated Vulgate Version of the Bible, and wrote books of the most marvelous Saint-tales and martyr-yarns, thus describes the approved methods of Christian propaganda, of the Fathers, Greek and Latin alike, against the Pagans:

"To confute the opposer, now this argument is adduced and now that. One argues as one pleases, saying one thing while one means another. . . . Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, and Apollinaris write at great length against Celsus and Porphyry. Consider how subtle are the arguments, how insidious the engines with which they overthrow what the spirit of the devil has wrought. Sometimes, it is true, they are compelled *to say not what they think but what is needful.* . . .

"I say nothing of the Latin authors, of Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius, Victorianus, Lactantius, Hilary, lest I should appear not so much to be defending myself as to be assailing others. I will only mention the APOSTLE PAUL. . . . He, then, if anyone, ought to be calumniated; we should speak thus to him: 'The proofs which you have used against the Jews and against other heretics bear a different meaning in their own contexts to that which they bear in your Epistles. We see passages taken captive by your pen and pressed into service to win you a victory, which in volumes from which they are taken have no controversial bearing at all . . . the line so often adopted by strong men in controversy—of *justifying the means by the result.*" (Jerome, *Epist. to Pammachus*, xlviii, 13; *N&PNF.* vi, 72–73; See *post*, p. 230.)

Of Eusebius and the others he again says, that they "presume at the price of their soul to assert dogmatically whatever first comes into their head." (Jerome, *Epist.* li, 7; *id.* p. 88.) And again, of the incentive offered by the gullible ignorance of the Faithful, for the glib mendacities of the priests: "There is nothing so easy as by sheer volu-

bility to deceive a common crowd or an uneducated congregation." (*Epist.* lii, 8; p. 93.) Father Jerome's own high regard for truth and his zeal in propaganda of fables for edification of the ignorant ex-pagan Christians is illustrated in numberless instances. He tells us of the river Ganges in India, which "has its source in Paradise"; that in India "are also mountains of gold, which however men cannot approach by reason of the griffins, dragons, and huge monsters which haunt them; for such are the guardians which avarice needs for its treasures." (*Epist.* cxxv, 6; *N&PNF.* vi, 245.) He reaches the climax in his famous *Lives of sundry Saints.* He relates with all fervor the marvelous experiences of the "blessed hermit Paulus," who was 113 years of age, and for sixty years had lived in a hole in the ground in the remotest recesses of the desert; his nearest neighbor was St. Anthony, who was only ninety and lived in another hole four days' journey away. The existence and whereabouts of Paulus being revealed to Anthony in a vision, he set out afoot to visit the holy Paulus. On the way, "all at once he beholds a creature of mingled shape, half horse half man, called by the poets Hippo-centaur," with whom he holds friendly converse. Later "he sees a mannikin with hooked snout, horned forehead, and extremities like goat's feet," this being one of the desert tribe "whom the Gentiles worship under the names of Fauns, Satyrs, and Incubi," and whose strange language Anthony was rejoiced to find that he could understand, as they reasoned together about the salvation of the Lord. "Let no one scruple to believe this incident," pleads Father Jerome; "its truth is supported by" one of these creatures that was captured and brought alive to Alexandria and sent embalmed to the emperor at Antioch. Finally holy Anthony reached the retreat of the blessed Paulus, and was welcomed. As they talked, a raven flew down and laid a whole loaf of bread at their feet. "See," said Paulus, "the Lord truly loving, truly merciful, has sent us a meal. For the last sixty years I have always received half a loaf; but at your coming the Lord has doubled his soldier's rations." During the visit Paulus died; Anthony "saw Paulus in robes of snowy white ascending on high among a band of angels, and the choirs of prophets and apostles." Anthony dragged the body out to bury it, but was without means to dig a grave; as he was lamenting this unhappy circumstance, "behold, two lions from the recesses of the desert with manes flying on

their necks came rushing along; they came straight to the corpse of the blessed old man," fawned on it, roared in mourning, then with their paws dug a grave just wide and deep enough to hold the corpse; came over and licked the hands and feet of Anthony, and ambled away. (Jerome, *Life of Paulus the First Hermit, N&PNF.* vi, 299 *seq.*)

So gross and prevalent was the clerical habit of pious lies and pretenses "to the glory of God," that St. Augustine, about 395 A. D., wrote a reproving treatise to the Clergy, *De Mendacio* (On Lying), which he found necessary to supplement in 420 with another book, *Contra Mendacium* (Against Lying). This work, says Bishop Wordsworth, "is a protest against these 'pious frauds' which have brought discredit and damage on the cause of the Gospel, and have created prejudice against it, from the days of Augustine to our own times." (*A Church History,* iv, 93, 94.) While Augustine disapproves of downright lying even to trap heretics,—a practice seemingly much in vogue among the good Christians: "It is more pernicious for Catholics to lie that they may catch heretics, than for heretics to lie that they may not be found out by Catholics" (*Against Lying,* ch. 5; *N&PNF.* iii, 483); yet this Saint heartily approves and argues in support of the chronic clerical characteristics of *suppressio veri,* of suppression or concealment of the truth for the sake of Christian "edification," a device for the encouragement of credulity among the Faithful which has run riot through the centuries and flourishes today among the priests and the ignorant pious: "It is lawful, then, either to him that discourses, disputes, and preaches of things eternal, or to him that narrates or speaks of things temporal pertaining to *edification* of religion or piety, to *conceal* at fitting times *whatever seems fit to be concealed;* but to tell a lie is never lawful, therefore neither to conceal by telling a lie." (Augustine, *On Lying,* ch. 19; *N&PNF.* iii, 466.) The great Bishop did not, however, it seems, reck his own rede when it came to preaching unto edification, for in one of his own sermons he thus relates a very notable experience: "I was already Bishop of Hippo, when I went into Ethiopia with some servants of Christ there to preach the Gospel. In this country we saw many men and women *without heads,* who had two great eyes in their breasts; and in countries still more southly, we saw people who had but one eye in their foreheads." (Augustine, *Sermon 37;* quoted in Taylor, *Syn-*

tagma, p. 52; *Diegesis*, p. 271; Doane, *Bible Myths*, p. 437.) To the mind's eye the wonderful spectacle is represented, as the great Saint preached the word of God to these acephalous Faithful: we see the whole congregation of devout and intelligent Christians, without heads, watching attentively without eyes, listening intently without ears, and understanding perfectly without brains, the spirited and spiritual harangue of the eloquent and veracious St. Augustine. And every hearer of the Sermon in which he told about it, believed in fulness of faith and infantile credulity every word of the noble Bishop of Hippo, giving thanks to God that the words of life and salvation had been by him carried to so remarkable a tribe of God's curious children.

Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), in one momentary lapse in his own arduous labors of propagating "lies to the glory of God," made the pious gesture, "God does not need our lies"; but His Church evidently did, for the pious work went lyingly on; a work given immense impetus by His Holiness Gregory himself, in his mendacious *Dialogues* and other papal output,—with little abatement unto this day.

A further admission of the inveteracy of ecclesiastical forgery and fraud may be cited from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Speaking deprecatingly of the "incredible liberty of discussion" which to the shock and scandal of the pious prelates "prevailed in Rome under the spell of the Renaissance,"—when men's minds were beginning to awaken from the intellectual and moral stupor of the Dark Ages of Faith, the Catholic thesaurus of archaic superstition and "Catholic Truth," admits:

"This toleration of evil [*sic; i. e.*:—the free discussion of Church doctrines and documents]—bore one good consequence: it allowed historical criticism to begin fair. There was need for a revision which is not yet complete, ranging over *all that has been handed down* from the Middle Ages under the style and title of the Fathers, the Councils, the Roman and other official archives. *In all these departments forgery and interpolations as well as ignorance* had wrought mischief on a great scale." (*CE.* xii, 768.)

To these preliminary confessions of the guilty Church may be added the corroborating testimony of several eminently accredited historical authorities.

Middleton, in his epochal *Free Inquiry* into the lying habits and miracles of the Churchmen, says: "Many spurious books were forged in the earliest times of the Church, in the name of Christ and his apostles, which passed upon all the Fathers as genuine and divine through several successive ages." (Middleton, *Free Inquiry, Int. Disc.* p. xcii; London, 1749.)

The same author, whose book set England ringing with its exposures of the lies and fraudulent miracles of the Church, makes this acute and accurate summing up of his evidences:

"It will not appear strange to those who have given any attention to the history of mankind, which will always suggest this sad reflection: That the greatest zealots in religion, or the leaders of sects and parties, whatever purity or principles they pretend to, have seldom scrupled to make use of a commodious lie for the advancement of what they call the truth. And with regard to these very Fathers, there is not one of them, as an eminent writer of ecclesiastical history declares, who made any scruple in those ages of using the *hyperbolical style* to advance the honor of God and the salvation of men." (*Free Inq.* p. 83; citing Jo., *Hist. Eccles.* p. 681.)

Lecky, the distinguished author of the *History of European Morals*, devotes much research into what he describes as "the deliberate and apparently perfectly unscrupulous forgery of a whole literature, destined to further the propagation either of Christianity as a whole, or of some particular class of tenets." (Lecky, *Hist. of European Morals*, vol. i, p. 375.)

In his very notable *History of Rationalism*, speaking of that Christian "epoch when faith and facts did not cultivate an acquaintance," the same author, Lecky, thus describes the state of intellectual and moral obliquity into which the Church had forced even the ablest classes of society:

"During that gloomy period the only scholars in Europe were priests and monks, who conscientiously believed that no amount of falsehood was reprehensible which conduced to the edification of the people. . . . All their writings, and more especially their histories, became tissues of the wildest fables, so grotesque and at the same time so audacious, that they were the wonder of succeeding ages. And the very men who scattered these fictions broadcast over Christendom, taught at the same time that credulity

was a virtue and skepticism a crime." (Lecky, *Hist. of Rationalism*, i, 396.)

In the same work last quoted, Lecky again, speaking of what he terms "the pious frauds of theologians," which, he shows were "systematized and raised to the dignity of a regular doctrine," says of the pious Fathers:

"The Fathers laid down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable and even laudable, and if they had not laid this down they would nevertheless have practiced them as a necessary consequence of their doctrine of exclusive salvation. Immediately all ecclesiastical literature became tainted with a spirit of the most unblushing mendacity. Heathenism was to be combatted, and therefore prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied. . . . Heretics were to be convinced, and therefore interpolations of old writings or complete forgeries were habitually opposed to the forged Gospels. . . . The tendency . . . triumphed wherever the supreme importance of dogmas was held. Generation after generation it became more universal; it continued till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth seemed blotted out from the minds of men." (Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe, i,* 396–7.)

There is thus disclosed a very sharp and shaming contrast between the precept of the Lord Buddha: "Thou shalt not attempt, either by words or action, to lead others to believe that which is not true," and the confessed debasing principle of the Church, that the maintenance of its creed—(even by the methods of fraud, forgery and imposture above hinted and to be evidenced)—is superior to the principles of morality:

"To undo the creed is to undo the Church. The integrity of the rule of faith is more essential to the cohesion of a religious society than the strict practice of its moral precepts"! (*CE.* vii, 259).

With its consciousness of the shifty and shady practices of its "sacred" profession, the Christian priestcraft differs not from the Pagan in the sneer of Cicero: "*Cato mirari se aiebat, quod non rideret haruspex, cum haruspicem vidisset,*—Cato used to wonder how one of our priests can forbear laughing when he sees another." (Quoted *Opera,* Ed. Gron., p. 3806.) We shall see all too well that the Pagan

estimate holds good for the Christian; that, as said by the "universal scholar" Grotius: "Ecclesiastical history consists of nothing but the wickedness of the governing clergy,—*Qui legit historiam Ecclesiasticam, quid legit nisi Episcoporum vicia?*" (*Epistolæ*, p. 7, col. 1).

The universality of the frauds and impostures of the Church, above barely hinted at, and the contaminating influence of such example, are by now sufficiently evident; they will be seen to taint and corrupt every phase of the Church and of the ecclesiastical propaganda of the Faith. As is well said by Middleton in commenting on these and like pious practices of the Holy Church: "And no man surely can doubt, but that those, who would either forge, or make use of forged books, would, in the same cause, and for the same ends, make use of forged miracles" (*A Free Inquiry, Introd. Discourse*, p. lxxxvii);—as well as of forged Gospels, Epistles, Creeds, Saint-tales—vast extensions of pious frauds of which we shall see a plethora of examples.

The proofs here to be arrayed for conviction are drawn from original sources, chiefly those inexhaustible mines of priestly perversions of fact and truth, the labored and ludricrous volumes of the "Fathers of the Church," and its most accredited modern American spokesman, the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Hence it cannot be justly complained that this presentation of *facts* of Church history is unfair or untrue; all but *every fact* of secular and of Church history herein recounted to the shame and guilt of Holy Church is taken *verbatim* from the Church's own histories and historians. These clerical works of confession and confusion are for the most part three ponderous sets of volumes; they are readily accessible for verification of my recitals, and for further instances, in good libraries and bookshops; the libraries of the Union Theological Seminary and of Columbia University, in New York City, were the places of the finds here recorded. Cited so often, space will be saved for more valuable uses by citing by their initials,—which will become very familiar—my chief ecclesiastical authorities, towit:

The *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, cited as *ANF.*; A Collection of the extant Writings of all the Founders of Christianity down to the Council of Nicæa, or Nice, in 325 A. D. American Reprint, eight volumes. The Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, N. Y., 1885.

The *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, cited as *N&PNF.*; First and Second Series; many volumes; same publishers.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, cited as *CE.*; fifteen volumes and index, published under the *Imprimatur* of Archbishop Farley; New York, Robert Appleton Co., 1907–9.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica*, cited as *EB.*, four volumes; Adam & Charles Black, London, 1899; American Reprint, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1914.

The clerical confessions of lies and frauds in the ponderous volumes of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* alone suffice, and to spare, to wreck the Church and to destroy utterly the Christian religion. We shall see.

RELIGIOUS LAWS OF OUTLAWRY

The land, the religious world, even today is ringing with the furious din of religious intolerance, bigotry and persecution; pestiferous Medieval laws are imposed to stop the voice of Science teaching truths which impugn the ignorant myths of Bible and Theology. Tennessee and several States of the Union have passed laws making criminal the teaching of scientific facts which contradict "the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible," and like Hillbilly legislation is sought in all the States. The True Church lays down this amazing limitation on learning: "When a clearly defined dogma contradicts a scientific assertion, *the latter has to be revised*"! (*CE.* xiii, 607.) The civilized portion of the world has just been shocked at the potential judicial murder and outrage sanctioned by law in North Carolina, as likewise in a number of other States, making outlaws of honest persons who, as parties in interest or witnesses in actions civil and criminal, refuse to take the ridiculous and degrading Form of Oath "upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, in token of his engagement to speak the truth, as he hopes to be saved in the way and method of salvation pointed out in that blessed volume; and in further token that, if he should swerve from the truth, he may be justly deprived of all the blessings of the Gospel, and be made liable to that vengeance which he has imprecated on his own head." (*Consol. Stat. N. C., 1919*, sec. 3189.)

Under this infamous statute, in the late so-called Gastonia, N. C.

murder trial, the wife of one of the defendants, who had testified that her husband was not present and had no part in the shooting, was challenged as a witness and impeached, her testimony discredited, and her husband convicted for want of her evidently candid testimony: but true or not, the principle of infamy is the same—a citizen on trial for his liberty was refused the benefit of evidence under this damnable statute, and he and his wife made outlaws—refused "the equal protection of the law"! In Maryland, later in the same year 1929, a chicken-thief, caught in the act of robbery by the owner, was discharged in court because the owner of the property, a Freethinker, was not permitted under the infamous similar statute of that godly State to give testimony in court against the criminal: the case would have been the same, if the life or liberty of the Infidel citizen had been at stake,—he was an outlaw denied the "equal protection of the law"! The benighted State of Arkansas—("Now laugh!")—declares infamously in its Constitution: "*No person who denies the being of a God shall hold any office in the civil government of this State, nor be competent to testify as a witness in any court*"! (*Const. Ark.*, Art. XIX, sec. 26.) Under this accursed act of outlawry, Charles Lee Smith, of New York City, a native of Arkansas, went to his home city of Little Rock in the Fall of 1928 to oppose the degrading proposition proposed as a law in a popular initiative election, forbidding the teaching of Evolution in the State-supported schools and universities; he made some remarks reflecting upon the personal integrity of the Almighty, as well as denying his existence; twice was he arrested, thrown into jail, convicted, and was denied the right to testify as a witness in his own behalf; he is today on bail to answer to the decision of the Supreme Court of that State, an outlaw, denied the "equal protection of the law" of the land! The hypocrisy and self-stultification imposed by such detestable laws, is finely illustrated: At the recent annual meeting of the American Law Institute, I denounced this Article to a leader of the Arkansas Bar, and appealed to him to "start something" to get rid of it. He shrugged his shoulders, smiled in sympathy, and said: "It is in the Constitution, and too difficult to get it out." Then, dropping into Spanish, so that others at the table might not understand, he added: "*Yo no creo nada,—y no digo nada*—I believe nothing—and I say nothing"! While these infamies are in-

flicted upon the citizens of this country by law imposed by a bigoted and ignorant minority of superstitious parsons and their docile dupes; —aye, even if imposed by an overwhelming majority, or by authentic decree of God himself,—the free and fearless defiers of Church and despisers of its Superstition will fight it on to the death, till every trace of these infamies is purged out of the statute books of these sovereign States! This is due and solemn notice and defiance to the intolerant religious oppressors and their deluded dupes.

Medieval laws against the fictitious crime of "Blasphemy" survive in a dozen American States, protecting by law the Christian superstition of the old Hebrew God. A model of them all is this infamous enactment of the Church-ridden Massachusetts: "Whoever wilfully blasphemes the holy name of God by denying, cursing or contumeliously reproaching God, his creation, government or final judging of the world, or by cursing or contumeliously reproaching Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost—[the whole Divine Family],—or by cursing or contumeliously reproaching or exposing to contempt or ridicule, the holy word of God contained in the holy scriptures shall be punished by imprisonment in jail for not more than one year or by fine of not more than three hundred dollars, and may also be bound to good behavior." (*Gen. Laws Mass.*, 1921; Chap. 272, sec. 36.) Expressed contempt is held in lighter pecuniary estimation in the Yankee "Nutmeg State," the fine being only $100.00, plus the year in gaol. (*Gen. Stat. Conn.*, 1918, sec. 6395.) In both States, under these infamous laws, persons have been indicted, tried and convicted within the past two years! Throughout the Union are odious religious statutes, "Blue Laws" and Sunday Laws, penalizing innocuous diversions and activities of the people on days of religious Voodoo: Sunday, as we shall see, being a plagiarization from the religion of Mithras, and created a secular holiday—not a religious Holy Day—by law of the Pagan Constantine. Such laws sometimes prove troublesome to the pious Puritans themselves; an amusing instance of their boomerang effect being now chronicled to the annoyed and sneering world. Some "400" of the True Believers of the "Holy Name Society" of St. Peter's R. C. Church of New Brunswick, in the saintly State of New Jersey, including several City "Fathers" stuck their legs under the loaded tables of the local hostlery for a "Holy Communion Breakfast" the past Sun-

day; as they began to eat they discovered to their pious dismay that there was no bread on the tables, although the reservation had long before been made, with particular stress on a special brand of rolls, made only in the godless town of Newark. Consternation reigned, with much confusion and hurried telephoning by the management. In the midst of it came a 'phone call from the driver of the roll-delivery truck, from the local Hoosgow: "I've been arrested for the violation of section 316 of the Laws of 1798, which prohibits the delivery of bread and rolls on the Sabbath and also forbids a man to kiss his wife on that day"! Some of the sachems called the chief of police and angrily demanded that this holy law be violated by delivering the blessed rolls; the driver was arraigned before the Recorder, who "released him with a warning," and he consummated the violation by delivering the forbidden rolls to the angry Holy Namers. (*Herald-Tribune*, May 14, 1930.)

Now, throughout the State, and in far off Ohio, at the instigation of the parsons, these pestiferous pious laws are being forced into enforcement, headlined—"Blue Law Net Busy in Jersey," and recorded: "Hundreds of names and addresses were in the possession of the police today because their owners played golf, tennis or radios, bought or sold gasoline, cigarettes or groceries, or operated trolley cars, busses or trains in this capital city (of Trenton) on the Sabbath," with much more of detail; and in the same column, a dispatch from Dover, Ohio, that the police used tear-gas bombs to dislodge the operator from the projection-box of a local "movie" theater, who, with the owner and four employees, was "arrested for violation of the Sunday closing law"! (*N. Y. Sun*, May 26, 1930.) And all this medieval absurdity of repressive penal legislation to enforce obsolete religious observance by disbelievers, in a land whose every constitution proclaims the complete separation of State and Church! But for the defiance of fearless heroes of Rationalism who have through the ages contended, and suffered martyrdom by rack and stake in defense of human liberty, rack and stake and fiendish torture would yet be the penalty, rather than fine and jail, for violators of the odious proscriptions of Church and Church-minded, Church-driven, politicians. To know fully the insidious and intensive efforts being made throughout our country by the dupes of priestcraft to undermine and destroy the

liberties and rights of free men in the interest of canting religious Pharisaism, bent on rule and ruin, every true friend of freedom and enemy of the Church, should read intently and keep ever at hand for an arsenal of defense, Maynard Shipley's stirring book, *The War on Modern Science; A Short History of the Fundamentalist Attacks on Evolution and Modernism*—(Knopf, 1929),—which to read doth "make the angry passions rise" in righteous wrath against these pious conspirators against American liberties and the innate rights of man. The Church, too, through the ages has been and yet nefariously is "in politics," seeking to dictate and dominate and impose its malign superstitions by law: witness the two last presidential campaigns, and the pernicious activities of the Methodist Board of Intolerance, Meddling and Public Nuisance, as now being revealed by the Lobbying Investigation Committee of the United States Senate, whereby it is shown seeking to suborn and subordinate all to its intolerant superstitious dominance. In most European countries the True Church maintains its blatant "Catholic Party" in the elections and in the parliaments; here its operations are via the "grape-vine route," but effective, as through the corrupt machinations of St. Tammany; while the Methodist Party and the Baptist Party, and their allies the Ku Klux Klan pursue the same evil ends through vocal frightening of cheap politicians and of large sections of the people and press. The very pious Editor of the *Christian Herald* has just published a book on "The Church in Politics," in which with cynical frankness he asserts its right and discloses its odious methods.

These odious things are all the work and blighting effects of the unholy *Odium Theologicum* of Priestcraft, poisoning men's minds with the rancors of obsolete superstitious beliefs.

Remove the cause, the cure is automatically and quickly effected. To contribute to the speedier consummation of this supreme boon is the motive and justification of this book. It gives to the unctuous quack "Doctors of Divinity" a copious dose out of their own nauseous Pharmacopæia of Priestly Mendacity. As its takes its deadly effect upon themselves, haply their "incurably religious" duped patients may begin to evidence hopeful symptoms of a wholesome, speedy and complete cure from their priest-made malady.

"Fraud," says Ingersoll, "is hateful to its victims." The compelling

proofs of duplicious fraud of priestcraft and Church exposed in this book must convince even the most credulous and devout Believer, that the system of "revealed religion" which he "drew in with his mother's milk" and has in innocent ignorance suffered in his system ever since, is simply a veneered Paganism, unrevealed and untrue; is a huge scheme of priestly imposture to exploit the credulous and to live in power and wealth at his expense. Luther hit the bull's-eye of the System—before he established another to pass the same old counterfeit: The Church exists mostly for wealth and self-aggrandizement; to quit paying money to the priests would kill the whole scheme in a couple of years. This is the sovereign remedy. Let him that hath ears to hear, hear; and govern himself accordingly. Every awakened Believer must feel outraged in his dignity and self-respect, and in disgust must repudiate the Creed and its impostors.

When a notorious Criminal is arraigned at the bar of Justice and put to trial for deeds of crime and shame, it is his crimes, his criminal career and record, which are the subject of inquiry,—which are exposed and denounced—for conviction. No weight in attenuation is accorded to sundry sporadic instances—(if any)—between crimes or as cloaks for crime—of his canting piety and gestures of benevolence towards his victims, the dupes of his duplicity. Thus the Church and its Creed are here arraigned on their record of Crime,—"extenuating naught, naught setting down in malice";—simply exposing truly its own convicting record and confessions of its criminality, for condign judgment upon it.

Goliath of Gath was a very big Giant; but a small pebble, artfully slung, brought him to a sudden and violent collapse, a huge corpse. This TNT. bomb of a book, loaded with barbèd *facts*, is flung full *in facia ecclesiæ*—into the face of the Forgery-founded Church and all her discordant broods. The "gates of hell" will be exploded!

> But yesteryear the Church of God in might
> Has stood against the world; now *lies* she here,
> And none so poor to do her reverence!

JOSEPH WHEELESS

New York City
780 Riverside Drive
June 1, 1930

CONTENTS

Foreword: vii

I: PAGAN FRAUDS—CHRISTIAN PRECEDENTS 3

II: HEBREW HOLY FORGERIES 45

III: CHRISTIAN "SCRIPTURE" FORGERIES 91

IV: THE SAINTLY "FATHERS" OF THE FAITH 123

V: THE "GOSPEL" FORGERIES 172

VI: THE CHURCH FORGERY MILL 238

VII: THE "TRIUMPH" OF CHRISTIANITY 295

INDEX *Follows page* 406

FORGERY IN CHRISTIANITY

"Being crafty, I caught you with guile" . . .
"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my LIE unto his glory; why yet am I also adjudged a sinner?"

St. Paul.

"What profit has not that fable of Christ brought us!"

Pope Leo X.

CHAPTER I

PAGAN FRAUDS—CHRISTIAN PRECEDENTS

"Neither in the confusion of paganism, nor in the defilement of heresy, nor yet in the blindness of Judaism, is religion to be sought, but among those *alone* who are called Catholic Christians." (St. Augustine, *De Vera Religione,* v.)

EVERY RELIGION, PRIESTCRAFT, and Sacred Book, other than the Roman Catholic Christian, is thus branded as false in fact and fraudulent in practice. The Jews, however, excluded by those who have expropriated their ancient faith, make the same imputations of falsity and fraud against the Christian religion, based on their own ancient sacred Scriptures, and founded, as the Christians claim, by a Jewish Incarnation of the Hebrew God,—which, say the Jews, is a horrid blasphemy; and they brand the Sacred Books of Christian origin as false and forged.

The Christians, all their hundreds of warring Sects, in their turn impute to the Jews the blasphemous repudiation and monstrous murder of the Son of the ancient Hebrew God, Yahveh; and with ample usury of blood and torture have visited that fabulous iniquity upon the hapless sons and daughters of Jewry unto half a hundred generations of "God's Chosen People."

But, of the countless Sects of Christians, one alone, *it* avers, is of the True Faith; all the others are false and beyond the hope of heaven: "Whoever will be saved, it is necessary above all else that he hold to the Catholic Faith,"—so reads the venerable forged Athanasian Creed. (*CE.* ii, 33, 34.) The Protestant Sects, however, though they all admit the same origin and accept in full fatuity of faith most of the same forged sacred writings for their rule of faith as the One True Church, yet apply the scornful epithet "Antichrist" to their venerable

Mother in Christ; freely dub a dozen of her canonical sacred Books of Jewish origin, and most of her thousands of canonized Saints, forgeries and frauds; and assert many of her most holy dogmas and sacraments to be blasphemous and degrading superstitions. The while their own scores of hostile factions mutually recriminate each the others as blind leaders of the blind and perverters of the sacred Truth.

It will serve a useful purpose to take a look behind all this dust-and-smoke screen of "*Odium Theologicum*" and make a brief survey of the origins of religious superstitions and priestcraft, and of the known and admitted falsities and frauds of Paganism, and some venerable other religious *Isms*. This will demonstrate that these same things are now part and parcel of Christianity. This induces the inquiry, Wherein the data of Christianity as a whole may haply differ from the admitted frauds of the false religions and priestcrafts of the Past. We shall learn whether and to what degree truth may be found in any of the confused and confusing Christian claims of Truth.

THE DAWN-MAN AND THE SHAMAN

"There is no origin for the idea of an after-life save the conclusion which the savage draws from the notion suggested by dreams."—*Herbert Spencer.*

Lo, the poor Indian, with his untutored mind, saw his god in clouds and heard him in the wind. Ages before him, the Dawn-man, the earliest Cave-man, saw his shadow in the sun, his reflection in the water, and crudely thought that he had a sort of shadowy double, which accompanied him and at times showed itself visible to him. At night, when the Dawn-man, gorged with raw and often putrid flesh, in a nightmare dream saw terrible monsters assailing him, or in more normal sleep wandered forth and visited distant scenes of his previous roamings, or saw, as in the flesh living and acting before his eyes, his dead father or friend, thus he got further immature notions of a double, "ka," or detachable spirit of man, dwelling within him, which could leave the body and return at will, or which survived the death of the body and lived on in spirit form, and could revisit the old habitation and hold converse with, do good or harm to, the frightened living. Thus came the belief in the existence and survival after death of this

double or spirit-ghost; thus the notion of the immortality of the soul, a primitive belief held by every people of antiquity, and surviving yet by inheritance among the priest-taught of modern times.

These strange phantoms of the night naturally worked further upon the fear-filled mind of the early child-men, terrified by the frightful vicissitudes of life, the violent deaths by wild animals, the storms and floods that killed and maimed them, the lightnings and thunders that terrified them. All these things were to them clearly the manifestations of the anger and revenge of the departed spirits, especially of the Old Man of the clan who had bossed it in life and had grudges against all who had not been sufficiently obedient to him. Awaking from these dread visions of the night, the frightened Dawn-man would relate the uncanny visitations to his fellows, who would have like ghostly dream-stuff to exchange; together they would wonder whether something could be done to propitiate or placate the wandering ghost-men and to win their favor for benefits to be had from their superior other-worldly status and powers.

It could not be long before some old and crafty member of the nomadic clan would hint that he had known the Old Man well during life, had been very friendly with him living and had a powerful influence with him; that he was wise to the ways and whims of ghosts or gods; and no doubt he could get in touch with his spirit and cajole him into reasonableness and favor. This suggestion meeting with awed acquiescence, it would quickly be followed by the forthright bold claim to super-ghostly powers, and by sundry weird mumblings and mystic rites and incantations the old faker would further awe the clan into credulous faith in the claim. The new spiritualist would pretend to get into communion with the Old Man's spirit, and to receive from him "revelations" of his will and commands for the obedience of the clan. Thus began spirit-worship or religion—the fancied relations between man and the spirits of the dead or gods. Here, too, we have the first shaman, medicine-man, magician, witch-doctor, or what-not; in a word, the first priest; and the priestly game was on. The pretended ghost-cajoler would naturally be held in dread awe and reverence by his credulous dupes, and would gain enormous respect and prestige; he could quit the drudgery of hunting and fishing for his precarious living, and let the awed and believing members of the clan keep him

in food and idle ease: here the first social parasite. This is priestcraft —by whatever name and in whatever age and guise pursued.

A very modern instance comes to hand and is added for confirmation. Fortunately, or lamentably for Christian pretensions, there yet exist in the world races of very primitive descendants of Adam, who yet preserve their primeval forms of superstition and priestcraft, wherein may be seen their origins in yet active reality of operation. In no more remote a region of these our United States than the Diomede Islands of the Aleutian archipelago of Alaska, tribal superstition and primitive priestcraft may be seen in all their ridiculous crudity today. In the Report of the Stoll-McCracken Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History, 1928, primitive religious superstition and the power of the priest are graphically described; with simple change of form and ritual it is Religion through the Ages, the war-blessers and rain-makers in action to cajole and control the deity through his priests. As one reads the following extracts from the Report, let him see what differences he may discover, other than of technique, between the Diomeder and the Dupe of any other Cult. "For the Diomeder humbles himself before the imaginary forces of his spirit world, often disregarding the realities of life with typical primitive inconsistency. . . . The only powers really worthy of his respect are the supernatural ones. This is why the Eskimo medicine man, or angutkok, as he is called, holds a position of such influence. He is the middleman between the natural and supernatural world. The Diomeders have no real chiefs or any system of government. Each family is able to manage its own affairs. The common events of life take care of themselves. But whatever is unusual, whatever cannot be readily understood, engages the attention of every Diomeder. Such things as sickness and weather, good or bad luck and the complicated workings of nature fascinate him because they are utterly beyond his comprehension. Indeed, superstition is the basis of the angutkok's hold over his people. It is chiefly for his supposed alliance with the forces of the supernatural that he is venerated. . . . He is supposed to have marvellous powers over bodily ailments. . . . The power of conversation with the ancestral spirits is one of the angutkok's strongest holds upon his public. For the ancestral spirits are said to exert a tremendous influence over the lives of the natives. The Diomeder's

attitude toward them is more than one of wholesome respect. It is made up of a definite and deep-seated fear. This is because the spirits, if they choose, can send down either good luck or bad—and usually elect the latter. And clever must be the ruses whereby they may be tricked into benignity. For a departed soul, no matter how kindly has been its earthly owner, is a potential agent of misfortune and must be treated accordingly." (*New York Times Magazine,* Dec. 16, 1928, p. 9.) The methods of incantation, of placating the spirits and gods, the charms and amulets used for these conjurations, differ only in material from those in holy vogue today in some very Christian countries. Angutkok, shaman, medicine-man, exorciser, priest, Pennsylvania Witch-doctors, nature-fakers and superstition-mongers, parasites preying on ignorance and fear—the whole genealogy of dupe-craft, of priest-craft,—what difference in kind and craft is discernible between the one and the others of the god-placating, devil-chasing *Genus Shamanensis?* Bombarding the irate god with eggs, as with the Diomedes, or by the prayer of faith as with more up-to-date God-compellers, the cause is the same, and the effect is equally ineffective and desultory.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia,* describing the Doctors of Divinity as in vogue among sundry African tribes, well describes the entire confraternity in all religions: "Certain specialists, however, exist, known to us as sorcerers, witch-doctors, etc. who are familiar with the mysterious secrets of things, who make use of them on behalf of those interested, and hand them down to chosen disciples." (*CE.* i, 183.) One of the highest and most potent functions of all these primitive shamans and devil-doctors is the conjuring of the infinitude of devils which afflict the inner-works of the superstitious, and work havoc in weather, crops, herds, etc.; the practice and its ceremonial of incantation are very elaborate in some modern schemes: "This ceremony takes up over thirty pages of the Roman Ritual. It is, however, but rarely used—[in these more enlightened and skeptical days], and never without the express permission of the Bishop, for there is *room for no end of deception and hallucination* when it is a question of *dealing with the unseen powers*"! (*CE.* i, 142). Thus the System is yet in vogue; and its priestcraft has waxed very powerful and very wealthy. Artificial Fear and Credulity are its sole source and sus-

tenance. As the Roman poet Lucretius said: "Fear was the first thing on earth to make gods."

Reinach, after a critique of many varied definitions of Religion, thus formulates his own—which a moment's reflection upon the infinite sacred "*Thou Shalt Not's*" of Faith will fully justify: "A sum of scruples (Taboos) which impede the free exercise of our faculties." (*Orpheus*, 1930 ed. p. 3.)

As primitive society progressed towards organization, the Headman of the clan or tribe would find advantage in a close and not disinterested association with the Shaman, whose intimations of good from the spirits or dreadful evil would assist powerfully in the subordination and control of maybe otherwise ambitious or unruly subjects: thus began the coöperation of ruler and priest for the subjection of the ruled. Later yet, as government and priestcraft developed, the ruler was also priest or the priest ruler, as in early Egypt and Assyria, and as in ancient theocratic Israel before the Kings and after the return from Captivity. So too, later, in Greece and Rome. In Egypt and under the Empire in Rome the King was God, in Egypt by divine descent, in Rome by apotheosis. Even Alexander of Macedon was a god by divine generation, as declared by the Pagan Oracle of Jupiter Ammon, to the great scandal of Alexander's mother Olympias, who was wont to complain, "I wish that Alexander would cease from incessantly embroiling me with the wife of Jupiter!" Thus priestcraft thrived and gained immense dominion over the superstitious minds of men, to say nothing of powers and prestige unlimited, privileges, immunities, wealth and aggrandizement beyond rivalry—in ancient Pagan times.

The temples of the ancient gods throughout Pagandom were marvels of sumptuous wealth and beauty, thanks to the lavish munificence of rulers and the offerings of the votaries of the respective false gods. The Temple of Diana at Ephesus, the Parthenon or Temple of the Virgin-goddess at Athens, were wonders of the ancient world. The greatest ruins of antiquity yet standing in splendid ruin or unearthed by the excavations of the archeologists, are the temples of the Pagan gods, testifying in their decayed grandeur to their pristine magnificence and wealth.

Through the priests and the fear of the gods the rulers ruled:

"Thus saith our god" was the awful sanction of their commands and of their legal enactments. The Hebrews had no word for "religion"; their nearest approximation to the idea is the oft-repeated Bible phrase, "The fear of Yahveh [the Lord]." The ancient Code of Hammurabí, graven on the stela discovered by De Morgan in the ruins of Susa at the beginning of this century and now preserved in the Louvre at Paris, represents the King humbly receiving the Code of Laws from the great god Bel through the Sun-god Shamash; this for its greater sanction to obedience by the superstitious people, who knew no better than to believe the pious fraud of the priests and King. A thousand years more or less later, the Hebrew God Yahveh, along with many divine laws, delivered to Moses his Code of Commandments neatly scratched with his own finger on two stone slabs; of these, like the grave of Moses, no man knoweth the whereabouts unto this day. It was plain but pious fraud for Hammurabí to issue his laws under the name of his god. Common sense and common honesty make us disbelieve and condemn the Hammurabí fraud, and no one chides us for disbelieving it. Perforce we must believe the Moses-tale of identical import, or be dubbed atheists, reviled and ostracized, and be damned in the Christian Hell forever, to boot. Both fables of Divine enactment were invented for and served the same purpose—to dupe the credulous to believe and obey King and Priest. Is it honest?

This principle, involved in the pretense of divine sanctions, and effective through the coöperation of King and Priest for dominion over the ruled, was frankly recognized by many ancient writers, and even by some lauded as salutary for the ignorant. Critias, friend of Socrates, saw the State "with false reason covering truth," which by this device "quenched lawlessness with laws." Diodorus Siculus admitted it to be the duty of the State "to establish effective gods to do the work of police," and laid it down, that "It is to the interest of States to be deceived in religion." Livy admires the wisdom of Numa, who "introduced the fear of the gods as a most efficacious means of controlling an ignorant and barbarous populace." Polybius, the celebrated Greek historian, gives his philosophic admiration to the religious system of the Romans as an effective means of government of the populace:

"In my opinion their object is to use it as a check upon the common people. If it were possible to form a State wholly of philosophers, such a cus-

tom would perhaps be unnecessary. But seeing that every multitude is fickle and full of lawless desires, unreasoning anger and violent passions, the only recourse is to keep them in check by mysterious terrors and scenic effects of this sort. Wherefore, to my mind, the ancients were not acting without purpose or at random, when they brought in among the Vulgar those opinions about the gods and the belief in the punishments in Hades." (*Historiæ,* quoted by Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire,* pp. 3–4.)

This pious notion of God and religion as the Big Policeman of the common herd, is not yet extinct. The Attorney General of England, in a celebrated State trial for the sale of a copy of Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason,* urged to the jury the necessity "to prevent its circulation among the industrious poor"; for, he declaimed, "Of all human beings *they* stand most in need of the consolations of religion; . . . because no man can be expected to be faithful to the *authority of man* who revolts against the government of God"! (*Williams' Case,* 26 *Howard's State Trials,* p. 719; 1798–99.) But times and creeds change; this is the Twentieth century. The professional religionists of today, however, forever dingdong the old "Morality Lie," that without the God-given Ten Commandments and like divine laws, ministered by them and reënacted and enforced by the State—there can be no morality, no human virtues, no decent government. The "True Church" makes mighty boast of its "saving civilization" after the Fall of Rome by the industrious preachment—as we shall amply see —of pious lies and practice of most unholy frauds among the semi-pagan Christian peoples who rose—despite the Church—on the ruins of Rome,—

> " . . . Whilst human kind
> Throughout the lands lay miserably crushed
> Before all eyes beneath Religion—who
> Would show her head along the region skies,
> Glowering on mortals with her hideous face."
> (Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura,* I.)

PAGANISM AT THE CROSS-ROADS WITH CHRISTIANITY

At the time of the advent of "that newer form of Paganism later called Christianity," the Græco-Roman world seethed with religions in a great state of flux and re-formation. Wonder-workers, miracle-

mongers, impostors in the guise of gods and Christs abounded. Simon Magus, Apollonius of Tyana, Apuleius, Alexander, Porphyry, Iamblichus,—performed prodigies of divine power and were hailed as genuine gods,—just as were Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv, 11–12), and, later, Jesus the Christ. Of these Pagan and Jewish "Christs" two will be briefly noted, for their very important Christian contacts and analogies. But first, some analogies of Pagan priestly fakeries.

The petty frauds of the Pagan priests to dupe their credulous votaries would fill a large book; the ancient poets and philosophers, and modern histories of Gentilic religions, abound in instances. Simply for examples of a few of the more common frauds of the Pagan priests, outdone a thousand-fold by the Christian priests and Church, as—(out of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*) we shall see,—we may mention some well-known pious frauds of the Greeks and Romans prevalent around the beginning of the Christian era and forming the religious atmosphere of the times in which the new faith was born and propagated.

False prophecies and miracles and fraudulent relics were the chief reliance among the Pagans, as among the Christians, for stimulating the faith, or credulity, of the ignorant and superstitious masses. The images of the gods were believed to be endowed with supernatural power. Of some, the wounds could bleed; of others, the eyes could wink; of others, the heads could nod, the limbs could be raised; the statues of Minerva could brandish spears, those of Venus could weep; others could sweat; paintings there were which could blush. The Holy Crucifix of Boxley, in Kent, moved, lifted its head, moved its lips and eyes; it was broken up in London, and the springs exposed, and shown to the deriding public; but this relation is out of place,—this was a pious Christian, not Pagan, fake. One of the marvels of many centuries was the vocal statue of Memnon, whose divine voice was heard at the first dawn of day, "the sweet voice of Memnon" which greeted the sun, as sung by poets and attested by inscriptions on the statue made by noted visitors, who credited the assertion of the priests that the voice was that of the god Ammon; the secret was discovered by Wilkinson: a cavity in which a priest was concealed, who struck a stone at sunrise when the worshippers were assembled, thus giving out a melodious ringing sound. Very famous was the Palladium or statue

of Minerva, thrown down from heaven by Zeus into Troy, and guarded sacredly in the citadel as protection of the city, which was believed to be impregnable so long as the statue was in the city; Ulysses and Diomede entered the city in disguise and stole out the sacred statue to the Greek camp; thence Æneas is said to have taken it to Italy, where it was preserved in the Temple of Vesta. Many cities of Greece and Rome claimed to have the genuine original. Another miraculous statue of like divine origin was that of "the great goddess, Diana" at Ephesus, which the Townclerk (in Acts xix, 35) declared that all men knew "fell down from Jupiter." Other holy relics galore were preserved and shown to the pious: The Ægis of Jove, forged by Vulcan and ornamented with the head of the Gorgon; the very tools with which the Trojan horse was made, at Metapontum; the sceptre of Pelops, at Chæronea; the spear of Achilles, at Pharselis; the sword of Memnon, at Nicomedia; the hide of the Chalcydonian boar, among the Tegeates; the stone bearing the authentic marks of the trident of Neptune, at Athens; the Cretans exhibited the tomb of Zeus, which earned for them their reputation as Liars. But Mohammedans show the tomb of Adam and Christians that of Peter! There were endless shrines and sanctuaries at which miracle-cures could be performed: oracular temples full of caverns, and secret passages,—that of the Cumæan Sibyl has recently been explored, and its fraudulent devices exposed. The gods themselves came down regularly and ate the fine feasts spread before their statues. In the apocryphal History of Bel and the Dragon, interpolated in the True Church's Book of Daniel (Chapter xiv), the Holy Ghost tells how this hero trapped the priests who stole at night through secret passages into the throne-room of the god and ate the good things furnished by the pious King and people. The gods came frequently to earth, too, and with the connivance of the priests kept amorous tryst in the temples with unsuspecting pious ladies, edifying instances of which are related by Herodotus and Josephus, among other chroniclers of the wiles of priestcraft.

Pagan prodigies of every conceivable kind were articles of popular credulity, affecting the commonalty as well as many of the highest category. The great Emperor Augustus, obedient to dreams, went begging money through the streets of Rome, and used to wear the skin of a seacalf to protect himself against lightning. Tiberius placed

greater faith in the efficacy of laurel leaves; both remedies are highly praised by Pliny. Caligula would crawl under the bed in thunder storms; the augurs had listed eleven kinds of lightning with different significations. Comets and dreams portended the gravest crises. Cicero and Valerius Maximus cite numerous instances of dreams being verified by the event. Livy relates with perfect faith innumerable prodigies, though he acutely observed, that "the more prodigies are believed, the more they are announced." The Emperors made numerous enactments against sorcery, divination, and all kinds of magic; the "Christian" Emperor, Constantine, prohibited all forms of magic, but specially excepted and authorized "that which was intended to avert hail and lightning,"—one of the specialties of the Christian priests. Such puerilities of the prevalent superstitions might be multiplied to fill volumes. (See case, *Experiences with the Supernatural*, etc.)

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

Apollonius of Tyana was one of the most notable of these wonder-working Christs. So extremely moral and pure were his doctrines and his conduct, and so mighty the works he wrought, that the Pagans insisted that Apollonius was the actual personage whom the Christians called Jesus Christ. By all reports, implicitly credited, Apollonius had raised the dead, healed the sick, cast out devils, freed a young man from a lamia or vampire with whom he was enamored, prophesied, seen in one country events which were occurring in another, as from Ephesus the assassination of Domitian at Rome, and had filled the world with the fame of his miracles and of his sanctity, just as did Jesus Christ. Apollonius was born about the same time as Jesus of Nazareth; the legends of their lives and deeds were very similar; the former, at least, has been justly described as "among that least obnoxious class of impostors, who pretend to be divinely gifted, with a view to secure attention and obedience to precepts, which, delivered in the usual way, would be generally neglected." (Anthon, *Classical Dictionary*, p. 165: see generally, Lecky, *Hist. of European Morals*, i, 372, *passim;* any good Encyclopedia.) Recall the current histories of Mohammed, the Mormon Joseph Smith, Mother Eddy—Jesus Christ—for instances of analogous pretensions.

This customary pretense of wonder-workers is confirmed by the

great Church Father Lactantius, in his *Divine Institutes*, dedicated to the "Christian" Emperor Constantine, in which he combated the Pagan imputation that Jesus was a magician, like Apollonius and Apuleius, whose wonder-workings he admits. Like all the Fathers, as we shall see, Lactantius, an ex-Pagan, had firm faith in magic, and believed all the magical wonders of the Pagan magicians as veritable miracles wrought by the divine power of demons or devils. He says that the Pagans "endeavored to overthrow his [Jesus'] wonderful deeds [by showing] that Apollonius performed equal or even greater deeds." But,"It is strange," he argues, "that he omitted to mention Apuleius, of whom many and wonderful things are accustomed to be related. . . . If Christ is a magician because He performed wonderful deeds, it is plain that Apollonius, who, according to your description, when Domitian wished to punish him, suddenly disappeared on his trial, was more skilful than He who was both arrested and crucified. . . . It was evident, therefore, that he [Apollonius] was both a man and a magician; and *for this reason he affected divinity under the title of a name belonging to another* [*Hercules*], *for in his own name he was unable to attain it.*" (Lact. *Div. Inst.* Bk. V, ch. iii; *ANF.* vii, 138, 139.)

SIMON MAGUS

Most notorious and important, from the viewpoint of the rising Christianity, was the Samaritan impostor, Simon Magus, the "great power of God," vouched for by divine inspiration as having "used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria," he having "of a long time bewitched them with sorceries," as the Holy Ghost of God ridiculously assures us in Acts viii. Not content with his own "great power of God," Simon, having seen some of the apostles at work bestowing the Holy Ghost on the peasants, offered money for the gift of like power to himself, but was curtly rebuked and refused by Peter. The especial importance of Simon Magus is his legendary Scriptural contact with the fisherman Peter, which developed, under the early Christian propensity for expansive mendacity, into a veritable literature of pious lies and prodigies associated with Simon and Peter, which was the chiefest if not sole basis, be it remembered, for the false pre-

tense, later developed, as we shall duly see, of the "sojourn" of Peter at Rome as Bishop and Pope. As these legends of the Samaritan impostor are wholly Christian impostures, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* will be called upon for an account of the Patristic canards. "By his magic arts," says our exponent of "Catholic Truth," Simon was called Magus, or the Magician; the account just given from *Acts* is "the sole authoritative [?] report that we have about him"; and it confesses the chronic mendacity of the Fathers by the remark, "The statements of the [clerical] writers of the second century concerning him are largely legendary, and it is difficult or rather impossible to extract from them any historical fact the details of which are established with certainty." Let us remember this characterization of these same Fatherly writers, who, lying about Simon *and* Peter together, in Rome, yet tell unvarnished truth about Peter alone, or Peter and Paul together, in Rome.

I may remark, that serious argument is made, that Paul himself is maliciously intended by some of the Fathers under the name of Simon, the constant conflict between Paul and Peter being disguised under the accounts of the inveterate struggles of Simon and Peter. (See *Encyc. Bib.* vol. iv, Art. *Simon Magus.*) The childish and fabulous histories of the Fathers regarding Simon and Peter and Paul in Rome and their contests of magic powers, are thus related:

"St. Justin of Rome (*'First Apolog.'* xxvi, lvi; *'Dialog. c. Tryphonem,* cxx), describes Simon as a man who, at the instigation of demons, claimed to be a god. Justin says further that Simon came to Rome during the reign of the Emperor Claudius and by his magic arts won many followers so that these erected on an island in the Tiber a statue to him as a divinity with the inscription 'Simon the Holy God.' The statue, however, that Justin took for one dedicated to Simon was undoubtedly one to the old Sabine divinity Semo Sancus (797) . . . The later anti-heretical writers who report Simon's residence at Rome, take Justin and the apocryphal Acts of Peter as their authority, so that *their testimony is of no value.* [p. 793.] . . .

"Simon plays an important part in the 'Pseudo-Clementines.' He appears here as the chief antagonist of the Apostle Peter, by whom he is everywhere followed and opposed. The alleged magical arts of the magician and Peter's efforts against him are described in a way that is absolutely imaginary. The entire account lacks all historical basis [citing several

works]. . . . The apocryphal Acts of St. Peter give an entirely different account of Simon's conduct at Rome and of his death. In this work also great stress is laid upon the struggle between Simon and the Apostles Peter and Paul at Rome. By his magic arts Simon had also sought to win the Emperor Nero for himself, an attempt in which he had been thwarted by the apostles. As proof of the truth of his doctrines Simon offered to ascend into the heavens before the eyes of Nero and the Roman populace; by magic he did rise in the air in the Roman Forum, but the prayers of the Apostles Peter and Paul caused him to fall, so that he was severely injured and shortly afterwards died miserably. . . . This legend led later to the erection of a church dedicated to the apostles on the alleged spot of Simon's fall near the Via Sacra above the Forum. *The stones of the pavement on which the apostles knelt in prayer and which are said to contain the impression of their knees, are now in the wall of the Church of Santa Francesca Romana.*" (*CE.* xiii, 797, 798.)

With respect to that statue erected in the Tiber to "Simon the Holy God," the account, above mentioned, does not do justice to Father Justin's invention; it is thus explicit: he says that Simon "performed feats of magic by demonic arts in Rome during the reign of Claudius, was held to be a god, and was honored by Senate and People with a statue in the middle of the Tiber, between the two bridges, bearing the inscription in Latin: '*Simoni, Deo sancto.* . . . To Simon the holy God.' The base of the pillar referred to was dug up on the island in the Tiber, at the place indicated by Justin, in 1574; the inscription, which was deciphered, runs: '*Semoni Sanco deo fidio sacrum* . . . *Sex. Pompeius* . . . *donum dedit.*' Thus the pillar was dedicated to the Sabine god Semo Sancus, and not by the Senate and People, but by the piety of a private individual." (*EB.* iv, 4538–9; cf. *CE.* xiii, 797–8.) The same authority, referring to the clerical fabrications above mentioned, says: "The Pseudo-Clementine Homilies and Recognitions contain yet another element of the very greatest importance. In them Simon displays features which are unquestionably derived from Paul, and plainly show him to be a caricature of that apostle drawn by an unfriendly hand." (*EB.* iv, 4540, with citations in proof.) Simon proclaimed as his doctrine—"asserting that none could possibly have salvation without being baptized in his name" (Tert., *Adv. Hæreses*, c. i; *ANF.* iii, 649); which group plagiarized the sentiment from the other, Christians, or Simoneans, I cannot verify.

SUPERSTITIONS AND REVELATIONS

The Pagans would appear almost to have been good Christians: they had their gods, (whom they fondly called Saviour and Messiah); the deaths and resurrections of gods; devils, angels, and spirits good, bad and indifferent; their heavens, hells and purgatories; they believed in immortality of the soul,—witness the Pyramids and the tombs of the Kings, as of Tut-ankh-Amen in Egypt, and of the Queen Shub-Ad, just unearthed in Ur of the Chaldees; their elaborate sacrifices, animal and human, even of their dear little children to appease their gods, as in Carthage and Canaan,—a chronic Hebrew practice. Virgin-births of demigods by the intervention of gods and human maids were common-places of Pagan faith, as were Virgin-mothers and god-child: the Christians imported theirs from Egypt—the Madonna statues of Isis and the Child Horus—of universal vogue at the beginning of this era of the Christ—may be seen in almost any first-class Museum, as the Metropolitan in New York and the University in Philadelphia. This popular Pagan device, the "Mother of God" and her God-baby-in-arms, was taken over as a Christian sop to the crowds of Pagans who were being enticed and forced into the Church; it was violently opposed by many of the more intelligent Churchmen: "Nestorius [Bishop of Constantinople about 404] had declared against the *new* and, as he asserted, *idolatrous* expression 'Mother of God' (Theotokos), thereby opposing the *sentiments and wishes of the humbler people*" (*CE.* iii, 101); and in protest Nestorius left the Catholic Church and founded one of the most wide-spread and powerful "heresies," which exists in the East to the present time. The Pagans had their holy mysteries and sacraments, baptisms of water and of blood, communions with the gods at their sacred altars, partaking of sacred meals to ingest the divine spirit and become godlike; they believed in the resurrection of the dead, and in final judgments meting rewards and punishments according to the deeds done in the flesh,—the Egyptian Book of the Dead, 3000 years B. C., giving priestly prescriptions for use before the judgment seat of Osiris, is found in almost every tomb of those able to pay for the hieroglyphic papyrus rolls. The Pagans had their holy days (from which the Christians plagiarized their Christ-

mas, Easter, Rogation Days, etc.); their monks, nuns, religious processions carrying images of idols (like those of saints today); incense, holy water, holy oil, chants, hymns, liturgies, confessions of sins to priests, forgiveness of sins by priests, revelations by gods to priests, prophecies, sacred writings of "holy bibles," Pontiffs, Holy Fathers, holy crafty priesthoods. All these sacrosanct things of Christian "Revealed Religion," were age-old pre-Christian Pagan myths and superstitions.

I puzzle myself to understand how there could be "divine revelations," to Jews and Christians, of things which for ages had been indentically ancient Pagan delusions and the inventions and common holy stock in trade of all Pagan priestcrafts. Indeed and in truth, there can be no divine revelation of miraculous "facts" and "heavenly dogmas" which for centuries had been, and in the early Christian ages were, the current mythology of credulous Pagandom. This I shall make exceeding clear.

CHRISTIAN "REVELATION" DEFINED AND DISPROVED

This paragraph is one of the most important in this book, and to it I invite specially serious attention and thought. It will disclose the substantial identity of Christianity with the most popular and widespread "Pagan" religion of the times, Mithraism, or the Persian Zoroastrian religion, the closest and all but successful rival of Christianity in the Roman world, and which might indeed have been successful, but that, soon after Constantine prostituted the Empire to the Church,—"with the triumph of Christianity Mithraism came to a sudden end. The laws of Theodosius signed its death warrant." (*CE.* x, 402.) That there may be no suspicion that the recital of these remarkable identities of Christian "revelation" with Pagan inventions is fanciful or exaggerated, the tale shall be told in the quoted words of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, which naïvely makes so many extraordinary admissions without seeming to be aware of their fatal implications.

"The essence of Revelation lies in the fact that it is the direct speech of God to man," says the Holy Ghost speaking through the Vatican

Council (1870), thus confirming what I have above said, that "divine revelation" cannot be of Pagan myths already current and long known to everyone. The same Heavenly Instructor tells us what Revelation is: "Revelation may be defined as the communication of some truth by God to a rational creature through means which are beyond the ordinary course of nature. The truths thus revealed may be such as are otherwise inaccessible to the human mind—*mysteries*, which even when *revealed*, the intellect of man is incapable of fully penetrating. . . . The Decree 'Lamentabili' (3 July, 1907) declares that the dogmas which the Church proposes *as revealed* are '*truths which have come down to us from heaven*' and *not* 'an interpretation of religious facts *which the human mind has acquired* by its own strenuous efforts.' " (*Vatican Decrees*, 1870; *CE.* xiii, 1.) And, asserts *CE.*: "The existence of revelation is as reasonably established as any historical fact"! (*CE.* xiii, 607.) Isn't *CE.* funny!

Divine Revelation is thus of things not previously known and which the revelationless mind of man is incapable of acquiring or inventing by its own efforts. Divine Revelation rests thus upon the same principle as the Law of Patents and Copyright. A book published, that is made known and given to the world cannot be the subject of subsequent copyright even by its author. When an application for a patent is presented, the first act is to search the records to ascertain whether a similar art or article has ever previously been known and in use: if so, no patent can be obtained: the thing lacks novelty. So exactly with "revelation": if some impostor or deluded person (*e. g.* Mohammed or Joseph Smith) claims that he has received a personal—and therefore necessarily private—"revelation" from some god, the only way whereby he can get a valid patent of authenticity and credibility for his "revelation," is to prove that its subject-matter has never before been known and in credulous circulation; the moment that from the search of the records—of other, or comparative religions,—it is shown that the same proposition has been previously known and current, in use and practice among some other priestcraft and its votaries—the thing is no revelation: the claim is a fraud. Let us see how this indisputable rule works to the destruction and proof of fraudulency of the "divine revelations" of Christian credulity.

MITHRAISM—AND CHRISTIAN MYTH

The Religion of Zoroaster, known as Mithraism, is confessed by *CE.* to be a *divinely revealed Monotheism,* or worship of a One God, and having a divinely revealed Moral Code comparable to the Christian,—a sacred system claimed by Christians to be a monopoly of the Hebrew-Christian religion to the exclusion of all heathen systems. This notable confession reads: "The Avesta system may be best defined as MONOTHEISM, modified by a physical and moral dualism, with an ethical system based on a *Divinely revealed* moral code and human free will." (*CE.* ii, 156.) Though it quotes a Jesuit as saying: "Mithraism is the highest religious result to which human reason *unaided* by Revelation, can attain." (*Id.*) Revealed or invented, it is virtually identical with Christianity; but as the mythic Mithraic god could not "reveal" anything, the human reason which devised Mithraism was quite equal to the Christian God so far as devising mythology and ethics is an attribute of godhead.

Mithraism is one of the oldest religious systems on earth, as it dates from the dawn of history before the primitive Iranian race divided into the sections which became Persian and Indian, as this same religion is contained both in the Persian Avesta and Indian Vedas. Thus its "revealed" or invented Monotheism by ages outdates the "revelation" of Yahveh to Moses; and it is yet a living faith to some thousands of surviving Parsees: "The religious cult is [yet] scrupulously maintained as of old. The ancient traditional and nationally characteristic national virtues of truth and open-handed generosity flourish exceedingly in the small, but highly intelligent community" of Parsees in India. (*CE.* ii, 156.)

The religion of Mithra anciently dominated Persia and the vast regions of the Orient; it entered Europe following the conquests of Alexander the Great. When in 65–63 B. C. the conquering armies of Pompey were largely converted by its high precepts, they brought it with them into the Roman Empire. Mithraism spread with great rapidity throughout the Empire, and was adopted, patronized and protected by a number of the Emperors up to the time of Constantine; it was only overthrown by the proscriptive laws and sword of Constantine and Theodosius, who "signed its death warrant" at the behest of

the triumphant and intolerant Christians, who absorbed virtually the entire system of Mithraism. But let *CE.* proceed with the story. The reader is asked to check mentally each of the uninspired details of Pagan invention with the "divinely revealed" *identities* of the Christian Faith.

"MITHRAISM"—PRE-CHRISTIAN CHRISTIANITY

"Mithraism is a pagan religion consisting mainly of the cult of the ancient Indo-Iranian Sun-God Mithra. It entered Europe from Asia Minor after Alexander's conquest, spread rapidly over the whole Roman Empire at the beginning of our era, reached its zenith during the third century, and vanished under the *repressive regulations* of Theodosius at the end of the fourth. [Of late it has been] brought into prominence mainly because of its supposed [?] *similarity to Christianity.*

"The origin of the cult of Mithra dates from the time that Hindus and Persians still formed one people, for the god Mithra occurs in the religion and sacred books of both races, *i. e.* in the Vedas and in the Avesta. . . . After the conquest of Babylon (538 B. C.) this Persian cult came into contact with Chaldean astrology and with the national worship of Marduk. For a time the two priesthoods of Mithra and Marduk coexisted in the capital and Mithraism borrowed much from this intercourse. . . . This religion, in which the Iranian element remained predominant, came, after Alexander's conquest, in touch with the Western world. When finally the Romans took possession of the Kingdom of Pergamum (in 133 B. C.), occupied Asia Minor, and stationed two legions of soldiers on the Euphrates, *the success of Mithraism was secured.* It spread rapidly from the Bosphorus to the Atlantic, from Illyria to Britain. Its foremost apostles were the legionaries; hence it spread first to the frontier stations of the Roman army.

"Mithraism was emphatically a soldier religion; Mithra, its hero, was especially a divinity of fidelity, manliness, and bravery; the stress it laid on good-fellowship and brotherliness, its exclusion of women, and the secret bond among its members have suggested the idea that Mithraism was Masonry among the Roman soldiery." Several of the Roman Emperors, down to Licinius, colleague of Constantine, built temples to Mithra, and issued coins with his symbols. "But with the triumph of Christianity [after Constantine] Mithraism came to a sudden end. The laws of Theodosius [proscribing it under penalty of death, to please the Christians] signed its death warrant. Though he was still worshipped a thousand years later by the Manichees. (p. 402). . . .

"*Ahura Mazda and Ahriman.*—This incarnate evil (Ahriman) rose with the army of darkness to attack and depose Oromasdes (Ahura Mazda).

They were however thrown back into hell, whence they escape, wander over the face of the earth and afflict man. . . . As evil spirits ever lie in wait for hapless man, he needs a friend and *saviour, who is Mithra.* . . . *Mithra is the Mediator between God and Man.* The Mithraists . . . battled on Mithra's side against all impurity, against all evil within and without. They believed in the immortality of the soul; sinners after death were dragged down to hell; the just passed through the seven spheres of the planets, leaving at each planet a part of their lower humanity until, as pure spirits, they stood before God. At the end of the world Mithra will descend to earth, . . . and will make all drink the beverage of immortality. He will thus have proved himself *Nabarses,* 'the never conquered.' . . .

"The *fathers* conducted the worship. The chief of the fathers, a sort of *pope, who always lived at Rome,* was called 'Pater Patratus' . . . The members below the grade of pater called one another 'brother,' and social distinctions were forgotten in Mithraic unity. . . . A *sacred meal* was celebrated of bread and haoma juice for which in the West wine was substituted. This meal was supposed to give the participants *supernatural virtue.* . . .

"Three times a day prayer was offered the sun towards east, south, or west according to the hour. SUNDAY was *kept holy* in honour of Mithra, and the sixteenth of each month was sacred to him as *Mediator.* The *25 December* was observed as *his birthday,* the Natalis Invictis, the rebirth of the winter-sun, unconquered by the rigours of the season." (pp. 403–404.) It may be noted that Sunday was made a Pagan holiday by edict of Constantine. In the fifth Tablet of the Babylonian (Chaldean) Epic of Creation, by the great God Marduk, we read, lines 17 and 18: "On the *seventh day* he appointed *a holy day,* And to cease from all work he commanded." (*Records of the Past,* vol. ix; quoted, Clarke, *Ten Great Religions,* ii, p. 383.)

To resume with *CE.*: "No proof of immorality or obscene practices has ever been established against Mithraism; and as far as can be ascertained, or rather conjectured, it had an elevating and invigorating effect on its followers. [So different from Christianity!] . . .

"*Relation to Christianity.*—A similarity between Mithra and Christ struck even early observers, such as Justin, Tertullian, and other Fathers, and in recent times has been urged to prove *that Christianity is but an adaptation of Mithraism,* or at least the outcome of the same religious ideas and aspirations. Some apparent [they are *very* apparent] similarities exist; but in a number of *details*—[it is substance that is identical]—it is quite as probable that Mithraism was the borrower from Christianity.—[But these essential identities are found in the Vedas and Avesta, of maybe two thousand years before Christianity; Zoroaster, who gave final form to the creed, lived some 600 years before the Christ!]—It is not unnatural to

suppose that a religion which swept the whole world, should have been copied at least in some details by another religion which was quite popular during the third century—[and for nine, or twenty centuries before!] Similarity in words and names means nothing; it is the *sense* that matters. [To be sure; we proceed to see more of the sense—the essence—to be identical] . . .

"Mithra is called a *mediator;* and so is Christ . . . And so in similar instances. Mithraism had a *Eucharist,* but the idea of the sacred banquet is as old as the human race and existed at all ages and amongst all peoples.—[Not much "divine revelation" in this the greatest of Christian mysteries!].—Mithra *saved the world* by sacrificing a bull—[just as the Jews saved themselves]; Christ by sacrificing Himself. . . . Mithraism was all comprehensive and *tolerant* of every other cult; Christianity was essentially *exclusive, condemning every other religion in the world,* alone and unique in its majesty." (*CE.* x, 402–404.)

But this "unique majesty" was hidden away in the catacombs of Rome for quite three centuries; coming out, it condemned and persecuted to death every other religion because rivals for the rich perquisites of priestcraft and dominion.

The above striking analogies, or identities, between the ages-old Mithraism and the "newer Paganism called Christianity," compelling as they are of the certainty of "borrowing" by Christianity, are dwarfed by the evidences now to be presented in the confessions of *CE.*, that the Jews first, then the Christians, took over bodily from the Babylonians and the Persians, not only the entire celestial and infernal systems of those two closely related religions, but virtually that high ethic, or moral code—"the highest religious result to which human reason unaided by revelation, can attain,"—which Christians so loudly pretend is, by "divine revelation" of their God—theirs alone, while all other peoples "sat in darkness and in the shadow of death" without its saving light. Christianity looks with disdain on the Mithraic religion because it is a "dualism"; that is, the Evil Spirit was separately created apart from the Good God; while it is a fundamental tenet of the Christian Faith, that its God himself created the Christian Devil and all evil—and is therefore morally responsible for all his deviltry.

Speaking particularly of Angelology,—though the admission will be found to apply to all the other features to be noticed,—*CE.* shows

that all this is an importation into Judaism from the Persians and Babylonians: "That the Persian domination and the Babylonian Captivity exercised a large influence upon the Hebrew *conception*—[*not*, therefore, a revelation]—of the angels is acknowledged in the Talmud of Jerusalem (Rosh Haschanna, 56), where it is said that [even] *the names of the angels were introduced from Babylon.* . . . Stress has been laid upon the similarity of the 'seven who stand before God' and the seven Amesha-Spentas of the Zend-Avesta. . . . It is easy for the student to trace the influence of surrounding nations and of other religions in the Biblical account of angels" (*CE.* i, 481);—which seriously cripples the notion of divine revelation regarding these celestial messengers of God. Again it indicates the "connection between the angels of the Bible, and the 'great archangels' or 'Amesha-Spentas' of the Zend-Avesta"; also "we find an interesting parallel to the 'angel of the Lord' in Nebo, 'the minister of Merodach.' . . . The Babylonian *sukalli* corresponded to the spirit-messengers of the Bible; they declared their Lord's will and executed his behests." . . . "The belief in guardian angels . . . was also the belief of the Babylonians and Assyrians"; the origin of the Bible "cherubim" was the same, as also of guardian angels, "as their monuments testify, for a figure now in the British Museum might well serve for a modern representation." For detailed accounts, see the articles "Angels" and "Guardian Angels," in *CE.* And so of Demons and Demonology, and Demoniac possession: "In many ways one of the most remarkable demonologies is that presented in the Avesta"; Ahriman being their chief devil, or *Daeva;* "the original meaning of the word is 'shining one,' and it comes from a primitive Aryan root *div*, which is *likewise the source* of the Greek Zeus and the Latin Deus. But while these words, like the Sanskrit *deva*, retain the good meaning, *daeva* has come to mean 'an evil spirit.' There is at least a coincidence, *if no deeper* significance, in the fact that, while the word in its original sense was synonymous with 'Lucifer,' it has now come to mean much the same as *devil*" (*CE.* iv, 714–15, *pasism;* 764). Lucifer, in the Bible, having also been originally "a shining one" in Heaven, was cast out into Hell and is now the Devil.

With these preliminaries of identity between the invention of angels and devils of Mithraic Paganism and Hebrew-Christian "revelation,"

we will now let *CE.* confess further identities, both of "revelation" and of the "divinely revealed moral code,"—summarized from the Mithraic Zend-Avesta. We seem to be reading the Catechism or a tract on "Christian Evidences."

"The name of the Supreme God of the Avestic system is Ahura Mazda, which probably signifies the All-Wise Lord. . . . Ahura Mazda is a pure Spirit; his chief attributes are eternity, wisdom, truth, goodness, majesty, power. He is the creator of all good creatures—*not,* however, of Evil, of evil beings—[as is the Christian God]. He is the supreme Lawgiver, the Rewarder of moral good, and the Punisher of moral evil. He dwells in Eternal Light, . . . a kind of manifestation of His presence, like the Old Testament *Shekinah.* . . . We find frequent enumerations of the attributes of Ahura Mazda; thus these are said to be 'omniscience, all-sovereignty, all goodness.' Again He is styled 'Supreme Sovereign, Wise Creator, Supporter, Protector, Giver of good things, Virtuous in acts, Merciful, Pure Lawgiver, Lord of the Good Creations.' . . .

"Opposed to Ahura Mazda, or Ormuzd, is His rival, Anro Mainyus, (later Ahriman), the Evil Spirit. He is conceived as existing quite independently of Ahura Mazda, apparently from eternity, but destined to destruction at the end of time. Evil by nature and in every detail the exact opposite of Ahura Mazda, he is the creator of all evil, both moral and physical.—[But of the Christian God: "I Jehovah create evil"; *Isa.* xlv, 7]. . . .

"The specific name of Ahura Mazda in opposition to the Evil Spirit is Spento Mainyus, THE HOLY SPIRIT: and Ahura Mazda and Spento Mainyus are synonymous throughout the Avesta. [p. 154]. . . .

"Around Ahura Mazda is a whole hierarchy of spirits, corresponding very closely to our 'angels.' . . . Of the good spirits who surround Ahura, the most important are the Amesha Spentas ('Holy Immortals' or 'Holy Saints'), generally reckoned as six in number (but seven when Ahura Mazda is included). . . . Most of all Vohu Manah rises to a position of unique importance. . . . Vohu Manah is conceived as the 'SON OF THE CREATOR,' and *identified* with the Alexandrian LOGOS [of John i, 1]. Asha, also, is the Divine Law, Right, Sanctity (cf. Psalm 118), and occupies a most conspicuous place throughout the Avesta. . . . With him are associated in a trio [TRINITY], Rashnu (Right, Justice), and MITHRA.—[These Aryan names sound unfamiliar; but as *CE.* has assured, "names mean nothing; it is the sense that matters";—and here we have the whole Jewish-Christian hierarchies of Heaven and Hell a thousand years before Jewish-Christian "revelation" identities!] . . .

"Face to face with the hierarchy of celestial spirits is a diabolical one, that of the *daevas* (Pers. *div* or *dev*) and *druj's* of the Evil Spirit. They

fill exactly the places of the *devils* in Christian and Jewish theology. . . . Perhaps the most frequently mentioned of all is Aeshma, the Demon of Wrath or Violence, *whose name has come down to us* in the Asmodeus (*Aeshmo daeva*) of the Book of Tobias [Tobit]. . . .

"In the midst of the secular warfare that has gone on from the beginning between the two hosts of Good and Evil stands Man. Man is the creature of the Good Spirit, but endowed with a free will and power of choice, able to place himself on the side of Ahura Mazda or on that of Anro Mainyus. The former has given him, through His Prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) *His Divine Revelation and law.* According as man obeys or disobeys this Divine Law his future lot will be decided; *by it he will be judged at his death.* The whole ethical system is built upon this great principle, *as in the Christian theology*—["revelation"?]. Moral good, righteousness, sanctity (asha) is according to the Divine will and decrees; Man by his *free will* conforms to, or transgresses, these. The Evil Spirit and his innumerable hosts tempt Man to deny or transgress the Divine Law, *as he tempted Zoroaster himself, promising him as a reward the sovereignty of the whole world.*—[Exactly Jesus and the Devil.]—'No,' replied the Prophet, 'I will not renounce it, even if body and soul and life should be severed!' (Vendidad, xix, 25, 26).—["Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, for it is written,"—may sound more Godlike but maybe little more heroic.] . . .

"The moral teaching *is closely akin to our own.* Stress is constantly laid on the necessity of goodness in thought, word, and deed.—["Through the Three Steps, the good thought, the good word, and the good deed, I enter Paradise."]—Note the emphatic recognition of sin in thought. Virtues and vices are enumerated and estimated *much as in Christian ethics.* Special value is attributed to the virtues of religion, truthfulness, purity, and generosity to the poor (p. 155). Heresy, untruthfulness, perjury, sexual sins, violence, tyranny, are especially reprobated. . . .

"The soul of the just passes over the bridge into *a happy eternity, into heaven,* the abode of Ahura and His blessed angels. The wicked soul falls from the fatal bridge and is precipitated *into hell.* Of this abode of misery a lively description occurs in the later Pahlavi 'Vision of Arda Viraf,' whose visit to *the Inferno,* with realistic description of *the torments,* vividly recalls that of Dante. . . .

"At the end of time, the approach of which is described in the Pahlavi literature *in terms strikingly like those of our Apocalypse,* will come Saoshyant (SAVIOUR) under whom will occur the *Resurrection of the Dead,* the *General Judgment, the renewal of the whole world*—["a new heaven and a new earth"]—*by a general conflagration* and terrible flood of burning matter ["the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat"]. This terrible flood will purify all creatures; even the wicked will be purified from all stains, and even hell will be cleansed and added to the 'new heavens and new earth.' Meanwhile

a mighty combat takes place between Soashyant [the "Saviour"] and his followers and the demon hosts of the Evil Spirit, who are utterly routed and destroyed forever. . . .

"The highest religious result to which human reason unaided by Revelation can attain"! (*CE.* ii, 154–156, *passim.*)

Thus "human reason unaided by revelation" had attained, ages before Moses, the Prophets, and Jesus Christ, a system of religious beliefs and a moral code in substantial identity with the "divine revelations" of God to Moses, the Prophets, and his Son Jesus Christ. At the time of the Advent of the Latter, and for three hundred years later, throughout the Roman Empire, that is, throughout the well-known world, this wonderful Pagan invention, with its "Pope" and Seat in Imperial Rome, and patronized by the Emperors, lived along side with and mightily rivalled the struggling Faith hid in the catacombs,—until its rival Christians got hold of the sword under Constantine, and "triumphed," its "death warrant was signed" in blood by the laws of the persecuting Christians. Did any God wondrously "reveal" to the Christians these holy Pagan dreams and myths? What a waste of while for a God to mysteriously "reveal" these "heathen deceits" thousands of years old, and that everybody in the world already knew!

BUDDHISM IN CHRISTIANITY

The account given by *CE.* of the Lord Buddha and of Buddhism, by the simple substitution of the names Christ—[the Saviour of Buddhism is Crishna, the "incarnation" of the supreme god Vishnu]—and Christianity, might well be mistaken for a homily on our own holy faith and its Founder—who would no more recognize present-day Christianity than would Buddha the crass superstition which is today tagged with his holy name. Says *CE.*:

"It is noteworthy that Buddha was a contemporary of two other famous religious philosophers, Pythagoras and Confucius. In the sacred books of later times Buddha is depicted as a character without a flaw, adorned with every grace of mind and heart. There may be some hesitation in taking the highly colored portrait of Buddhist tradition as an exact representation of the original, but Buddha may be credited with the qualities of a great and good man. . . . In all pagan antiquity no character has been depicted as so noble and attractive. . . .

"Buddha's order was composed only of those who renounced the world to live a life of contemplation *as monks and nuns.* . . . [In the time of King Asoka, 3rd century B. C.] Buddhism was in a most flourishing condition; it had become a formidable rival of the older religion [Brahmanism], while a tolerant and kindly spirit—[unknown to Christianity]—was displayed towards other forms of religion. . . . [By the seventh century A. D.—here it parallels Christianity again] an excessive devotion to statues and relics, the employment of magic arts to keep off evil spirits, and the observance of many gross superstitions, complete the picture of Buddhism, a sorry representation of what Buddha made known to men. . . . The vast majority of the adherents of Buddhism cling to forms of creed and worship that Buddha, if alive, would reprobate—[as would Christ in the case of Christianity]. Northern Buddhism became the very opposite of what Buddha taught to men, and in spreading to foreign lands *accommodated itself to the degrading superstitions of the people it sought to win*—[precisely as we shall see that Christianity did to inveigle the Pagans]. . . .

"Between Buddhism and Christianity there are a number of resemblances, at first sight striking. The Buddhist order of monks and nuns offers points of similarity with Christian monastic systems, particularly the mendicant orders. There are *moral aphorisms* ascribed to Buddha that are *not unlike* some of *the sayings of Christ.* Most of all, in the legendary life of Buddha . . . there are *many parallelisms,* some more, some less striking, *to the Gospel stories of Christ.* A few *third rate scholars* [contend that these are borrowings from Buddhism. Why not, as everything else is "borrowed" or filched?]. . . .

"One of its most attractive features . . . was *its practice of benevolence* towards the sick and needy. Between Buddhists and Brahmins there was a *commendable rivalry in maintaining dispensaries of food and medicine*" —long claimed as a holy monopoly of "Christian charity." (*CE.* iii, 28–34, *passim.*)

As elsewhere recounted, the Holy Ghost made a curious mistake in inspiring the certification of sundry Saints, and the Lord Buddha was himself canonized by Holy Church, as St. Josaphat, and the "Life" of this holy Saint was highly edifying to the Faithful as well as effective in spreading the Christian truth: "During the Middle Ages the 'Life of Barlaam and Josaphat' had been translated into some twenty languages, English included, so that *in reality the story of Buddha became the vehicle of Christian truth* in many nations"! (*CE.* i, 713.)

It is now evident, and will further so appear, that there is no single novel feature nor "revealed truth" in all the Christian religion: our

Holy Faith is all a hodgepodge or pot pourri of the credulities of every superstition from Afric Voodooism to the latest one anywhere in holy vogue among the credulous. Even our "idea" of God with its superlatives of "revealed" high attributes is very primitive: "The *idea* of a Being higher than man, invisible, inaccessible, master of life and death, orderer of all things, seems to exist everywhere, among the Negritos, the Hottentots, the Bantu, the Nigritians, the Hamites; for everywhere this Being has a name. He is the 'Great,' the 'Ancient One,' the 'Heavenly One,' the 'Bright One,' the 'Master,' sometimes the 'Author' or 'Creator'. . . . Nowhere is He represented under any image, for He is incapable of representation." (*CE.* i, 183, 184.)

Cardinal Newman, commenting on Dean Milman's "History of the Jews," groups a number of these Paganisms in Christianity, and says that Milman arrays facts "admitted on all hands," to wit: "that the doctrine of the Logos is Platonic; that of the Incarnation Indian; that of a divine Kingdom Judaic; that of angels and demons (and a Mediator) Persian; that the connection of sin with the body is Gnostic; the idea of a new birth Chinese and Eleusinian; that of sacramental virtue Pythagorian; that of Trinity common to East and West; and that of the rites of baptism and sacrifice equally ubiquitous"! (Newman, *Essays, Critical and Historical,* 7th ed., p. 231; as summarized by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson in *A History of Freethought in the XIXth Century,* p. 145–6. London, 1929.)

Such is our holy Christian "Faith which was once delivered unto the saints," which "superstition, drunk in with their mother's milk," yet persists with the ignorant and those who do not or will not know the truth.

That Christianity is indeed but a "new form of Paganism," and especially after it became the official or State religion, consciously and purposely, in furtherance of the Imperial policy of "One State, one Religion," perfected the amalgamation of the salient features of all the fluxing religions of the Empire so as to bring all Pagans within the one State-Church, is accredited by secular and Church history; and is quite ingenuously revealed by *CE.*, treating of the influence of Constantine on Christianity:

"Long before this, belief in the old polytheism had been shaken. The world was fully ripe for monotheism or its modified form, henotheism; but this monotheism offered itself in varied guises, under the forms of Oriental religions: in the worship of the Sun, in the veneration of Mithras, in Judaism, and in Christianity. Whoever wished to make a violent break with the past and his surroundings sought out some Oriental form of worship which did not demand from him too great a sacrifice. Some . . . believed that they could appropriate [the truth contained in Judaism and Christianity] without being obliged on that account to renounce the beauty of other worships. Such a man was the Emperor Alexander Severus (222–235); another so minded was Aurelian (270–275), whose opinions were confirmed by Christians like Paul of Samosata. Not only Gnostics and other heretics, but *Christians who considered themselves faithful, held in a measure to the worship of the Sun.* Leo the Great in his day (440–461) says that *it was the custom of many Christians to stand on the steps of the Church of St. Peter and pay homage to the Sun by obeisance and prayers.*

"When such conditions prevailed it is easy to understand that many of the emperors yielded to the delusion that they could *unite all their subjects* in the adoration of *the one Sun-god who combined in himself* the Father-God of the Christians and the much-worshipped Mithras; thus *the empire could be founded anew on the unity of religion.* It looks almost as though the last persecution of the Christians were directed more against all irreconcilables and extremists than against the great body of Christians. . . .

"It was especially in the West that the veneration of Mithras predominated—[after centuries of Christianity!]. Would it not be possible to gather all the different nationalities around his altars? Could not Sol Deus Invictus, to whom even Constantine dedicated his coins for a long time, or Sol Mithras Deus Invictus, venerated by Diocletian and Galerius, become the supreme god of the empire? Constantine . . . had not absolutely rejected the thought even after a miraculous event [!] had strongly influenced him in favour of the God of the Christians,—[who, however, worshipped the Sun!] . . .

"For a time it seemed as if *merely tolerance and equality* were to prevail. Constantine showed equal favour to both religions. As pontifex maximus he watched over the heathen worship and protected its rights. . . . In the dedication of Constantinople in 330 a ceremonial half pagan, half Christian was used. The chariot of the Sun-god was set in the market-place, and over its head was placed the Cross of Christ—[*not* the original, which his mother had not yet been reputed by the priests to have discovered—*i. e.* "invented,"—of which more anon], while the Kyrie Eleison was sung. Shortly before his death Constantine confirmed the *privileges of the priests* of the ancient gods. . . .

"In the same way religious freedom and tolerance could not continue as a form of equality; the age was not ready for such a conception: [with

more of the like, p. 299;—which is untrue, as Constantine himself had proclaimed religious freedom in the Edict of Milan of 313, and we have just seen it admitted in Buddhism, and it prevailed at all times in the Roman Empire, until the "Christian Emperors" gave the Church the sword, as in Chapter VII exemplified]. . . . *Without realizing the full import of his actions,* Constantine granted the Church one privilege after another. As early as 313 the Church obtained immunity for its ecclesiastics, *including freedom from taxation.* . . . Constantine moreover *placed Sunday under the protection of the State*—[*as a Pagan holiday,* as cited, *post*]. It is true that *the believers in Mithras also observed Sunday as well as Christmas.* Consequently Constantine speaks *not* of the day of the Lord, but of the everlasting day of the Sun. . . .

"Of Constantine's sons the eldest, Constantine II, showed decided leanings to heathenism, and his coins bear many pagan emblems; the second and favourite son, Constantius, was a more pronounced Christian, but it was Arian—[anti-Divinity of Christ]—Christianity to which he adhered. Constantius was an unwavering opponent of paganism; he *closed all the temples and forbade sacrifices under pain of death.* His maxim was: *'Cesset superstitio; sacrificiorum aboleatur insania'*—('Let superstition cease; let the folly of sacrifices be abolished'). *Their successors had recourse to persecution against heretics and pagans.* Their laws (Cod. Theod. XVI, v; [*post, Chapter VII*]) had an unfavourable influence on the Middle Ages and *were the basis* of the *much-abused* [!] Inquisition." (*CE.* iv, 297–301, *passim.*)

Thus was the ultimate merger and total identity of Paganism with "the new Paganism called Christianity" finally established by law and by Imperial policy of "One State and One Religion," to which conformity was enforced by laws of confiscation and death; all the other religions of the Empire were fused by fire and sword into a bastard Christianity; and the mental and moral benightedness known as the Dark Ages of Faith fell as a pall over Christendom for a thousand years until the renaissance of Pagan culture and freedom of thought darkly dawned over the world, and has fearfully struggled into a brightening day, whose motto of Hope is again *"Cesset Superstitio"!* when Constantine's funest "League with Death and Covenant with Hell" of State and Church will soon in reality be a forgotten Scrap of Paper!

ALL DEVILISH IMITATIONS!

The pious Christian Fathers were themselves sorely puzzled and scandalized by these same things; their books are replete with naïve

attempts to explain the mystery of it,—which they attributed to the blasphemous wiles of the Devil,—that "the Devil had blasphemously imitated the Christian rites and doctrines";—"always seeing in pagan analogies the trickery of devils." (*CE.* xi, 393.) "It having reached the Devil's ears," says the devout Father Justin Martyr, "that the prophets had foretold the coming of Christ, the Son of God, he set the heathen Poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the *true* history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables related of the sons of Jove." (I *Apology*, ch. 54; *ANF.* i, 181–182.)

Not only the Fathers, but the Bible, Hebrew and Christian, recognized and affirmed the actuality and ever-living reality of the Pagan gods, though the late post-exilic writer of the 95th Psalm maliciously dubs them devils: "All the gods [Heb. *elohim*] of the nations are devils" (Heb. *elilim*—not much difference between them—in Hebrew; Ps. xcvi, 5); and this view the Christian forger of the Epistle under the name of Paul to the Corinthians confirms: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils" (I Cor. x, 20). Though these malevolent flings at the venerable divinities of Pagandom are in direct violation of the Siniatic Law of God—"Thou shalt not revile the gods" (Ex. xxii, 28);—the Hebrew Yahveh being, according to divine revelation, simply one of many gods—"a God above all gods," even "God of gods and Lord of lords," who "judgeth among the [other] gods."

Fathers Justin, Tertullian, and many another, says the *CE.*, could only "see in all pagan law and ritual an immense pillage of Jewish traditions, and, in all the gods, Moses"; the error and folly of which notion, argues our authority, is demonstrated by reference to Middleton's *Letter from Rome*, in which he, with Calvin, "saw an exact conformity between popery and paganism." (*CE.* xii, 393.) Whether Middleton and Calvin were so far in error and folly in this opinion, our researches will reveal. Collins, too, in his *Discourse*, supports with good authorities the opinions of Middleton and Calvin. He cites Father Origen as "so far from disowning an agreement between [Pagan] Platonism and Christianity, that a great part of his book *Contra Celsum* consists in showing the conformity between them."

Likewise, he says, Amelius, a heathen Platonist, who flourished in the third century, upon reading the first verses of St. John the Evangelist, exclaimed: "*Per Jovem, barbarus iste cum nostro Platone sentit* —By Jove, this barbarian agrees with our Plato"; and he quotes the celebrated saying of Cardinal Palavicino—"*Senza Aristotele noi mancavamo di molti Articoli di Fede*—Without Aristotle we should be without many Articles of Faith." (Collins, *Discourse of Free Thinking*, p. 127.)

Not only did the Fathers and the Church admit with implicit faith the living reality of the gods of heathendom, their powers, oracles, miracles and other "analogies" to the Christian faith, they even made of such analogies their strongest apologies, or arguments, in defense of the truth of the Christian tenets. In his *Apologia* addressed to the Emperor Hadrian, Father Justin reasons from analogy thus:

"By declaring the Logos, the first-begotten of God, our Master, Jesus Christ, to be born of a Virgin, without any human mixture, we [Christians] say no more in this than what you [Pagans] say of those whom you style the Sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a parcel of sons the writers most in vogue among you assign to Jove. . . .

"As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be nothing more than man, yet the title of 'the Son of God' is very justifiable, upon the account of his wisdom, considering that you [Pagans] have your Mercury in worship under the title of The Word, a messenger of God. . . .

"As to his [Jesus] being born of a Virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that." (Justin, *Apologia*, I, ch. xxii; *ANF.* i, 170.)

The good Fathers carried their argument by analogy into proof of all sorts of holy Christian mysteries; the Pagan Oracles and miracles were undeniably valid and true, why not therefore their new Christian counterparts? "Without a single exception," says the historian of European Morals, "the Fathers maintained the reality of the Pagan miracles as fully as their own. The oracles had been ridiculed and rejected by numbers of the philosophers, but the Christians unanimously admitted their reality. They appealed to a long series of Oracles as predictions of their faith; not until 1696 was there a denial of their supernatural character, when a Dutch Anabaptist minister, Van Dale, in a remarkable book, *De Origine Progressu Idolatriae*, asserted in opposition to the unanimous voice of ecclesias-

tical authority, that they were simple impostures." (Lecky, *History of European Morals*, i, 374–375, *et seq.*; see pp. 378–381, *et seq.*) The Christian Fathers and their followers made themselves so ridiculous by their fatuous faith in the Sibyls that they were derisively called "Sibyllists" by the Pagans.

THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES

The most curious in all respects, and for our present purposes the most instructive of the ancient Pagan religious frauds, are the Sibylline Oracles, which, extensively reinforced by Jewish and Christian forgeries, were perhaps the most potent and popular "proofs" of the early Church for the divinity of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Christian religion; thus they deserve special notice here. All will remember, from their school histories of ancient Rome, the well-known legend of one of the Sibyls who came to King Tarquin the Second with nine volumes of Oracles, which she offered to sell to him for a very high price; being refused, she went away and burned three of the books, and returning offered the remaining six at the same price; again the King refused to buy, and she departed, burned three more of the books, and returned with the last three for which she demanded the original price. Astonished at this conduct and greatly impressed, the King consulted his augurs and was advised to secure the remaining treasures of prophecy before it was too late; he did so, and immediately the Seeress disappeared and was never seen again. The precious tomes were deposited with great care and jealously guarded in the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; a college of priests was instituted to have charge of them; and the divine Oracles were consulted with great solemnity only in times of the greatest crises of the State. The books were finally destroyed when the Capitol was burned during the wars of Sylla, but many others continued in existence.

The oracles were composed in Alexandrine verse, and claimed to be the work of inspired Pagan prophetesses called Sibyls; they enjoyed the greatest vogue and were believed with the most implicit faith by Pagans and Christians alike. There were a number of these Sibyls, and the number of the volumes of oracles is differently estimated as

a dozen or more; those with which we are chiefly concerned are the Roman Cumæan and Greek Erythræan Sibyls and the Oracles going under their names. The inveterate bent of the priestly mind for forgery in furtherance of its holy mission of imposture, led to the prompt adoption and corruption of these Pagan frauds, for the propagation first of the Jewish, then of the Christian Faith. "Because of the vogue enjoyed by these heathen oracles," says the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "and because of *the influence they had in shaping the religious views of the period*, the Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria, during the second century B. C. composed [*i. e.* forged] verses in the same form, and circulated them among the Pagans as a means of diffusing Judaistic doctrines and teaching. This custom was continued down into Christian times, and *was borrowed by some Christians*, so that in the second or third century, a *new class of Oracles emanating from Christian sources came into being*. Hence the Sibylline Oracles can be classed as Pagan, Jewish, or *Christian*. In many cases, however, the Christians merely revised or interpolated the Jewish documents, and thus we have two classes of Christian Oracles, those adopted from Jewish sources and those entirely written by Christians. . . . It seems clear, however, that the Christian Oracles and those revised from Jewish sources all emanated from the same circle [or band of Christian forgers] and *were intended to aid in the diffusion of Christianity*.

"The Sibyls are quoted frequently by the early Fathers and Christian writers, Justin, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, etc. . . . They were known and used during the Middle Ages in both the East and the West. . . . They all purport to be the work of the Sibyls." (*CE.* v. xiii, p. 770.)

Most notable of these forged Christian addenda to the Pagan-Jewish forged Oracles, is found in Book VIII, a lengthy composite of Jewish and Christian fraud, consisting of some 500 hexameter verses. The first 216 verses, says the *CE.*, "are most likely the work of a second century Jew, while the latter part (verses 217–500), beginning with an acrostic on the symbolical Christian word *Ichthus* is undoubtedly Christian, and dates most probably from the third century." (*CE.* xiii, 770.) *Ichthus* is the Greek word for fish, and the fish was the fitting and universal symbol of the early Christians as

typical of the "catch" of the Apostolic fishers of men. This cabalistic word *Ichthus*, worked into the professedly Pagan Oracle in the form of an acrostic, is composed of the initial letters of the popular name and title of the Son of the Christian God, in the Greek: "*Iesous Christos Theou Uios Soter*—Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." This fish anagram was an ancient Pagan symbol of fecundity, of great vogue and veneration throughout Pagandom, and was adopted by Christendom for the double reason that the initials acrostically formed the name and title of its new deity, and that in the ancient science fish were supposed to be generated in the water without carnal copulation, and were thus peculiarly symbolic of the Virgin-born Christ. Says Tertullian: "We, little fishes, after the example of our *Ichthus*, are born in water." (*On Baptism*, ch. i; *ANF.* iii, 669.)

The Church historian, Bishop Eusebius, preserves the Acrostic, taken from the Erythræan Sibyl, but says: "Many people, though they allowed the Erythræan Sibyl to have been a prophetess, yet reject this Acrostic, suspecting it to have been forged by the Christians"; which suspicion the good Bishop refutes by an appeal to Cicero, who, he assures, had read and translated it into Latin. (Eusebius, *Oration on Const.*, chs. 18–19; I, 274–5.) Father St. Augustine quotes the verses and says: "The Erythræan Sibyl has indeed written some things clearly and manifestly relating to Christ. . . . There are some, who suspected all these prophecies which relate to Christ, and passed under the name of the Sibyl, to have been forged by the Christians." (Aug., *De Civ. Dei*, xviii, 23; *N&PNF.* ii, 372–3.) Father Clement of Alexandria attributes to the Sibyls the same inspiration as the Old Testament, and cites Peter and Paul as appealing to them for a prediction of the life and character of Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul speaking thus: "Take the Greek books in your hand, and look into the Sibyl. How clearly she speaks of one God, and of the things to come; then take Hystaspes also and read, and you will find the Son of God much more clearly and evidently described." (*Strom.* I, 6, p. 761, Ed. Oxon.; also Lact., *De ver. sap.*, I, 4, 15; *Free Inquiry*, p. 34.)

The importance of the Sibylline Oracles, speaking through countless "interpolations" forged by Christian pens, for not only the propagation of the faith among the Pagans, but as actual *proofs*

of the truth of the fictitious "*facts*" of Christianity, cannot be overestimated; this justifies the following extracts from the *Divine Institutes* of Lactantius. The greater part, I dare say, of the seven Books of that notable work, addressed to the "mighty Emperor Constantine," is devoted to arguments and proofs of Jesus Christ and the principal events of his recorded life and acts, drawn copiously from the heathen gods and the forged Oracles of the Sibyls. These *proofs*, to the minds of Father Lactantius and of all the Fathers, as to the Pagans generally, were "more strong than proofs of Holy Writ"; for, he says, "perhaps the sacred writings [in the Old Testament] speak falsely when they teach [such and so about Jesus]; . . . *the Sibyls before taught the same things in their verses.*" Citing scores of Sibylline "prophecies" forged by the Christians for the belief and persuasion of the Pagans, who were effectively "refuted by these testimonies" and *thus* "brought to Christ," some of them, says Lactantius, urge that these prophetic verses "were not by the Sibyls, but made up and composed by our own writers," as the fact is above confessed by *CE.;* but, not so, argues the great Apologist; "do not Cicero and other Pagan authors, dead long before Jesus, testify to the Sibyls?"—Yes, to the Sibyls and their utterances then extant; not to the later Christian forgeries in their names. Moreover, these Christian "interpolations" imputed to the Sibyls, exactly as the muddled, ambiguous, meaningless "prophecies" of the Old Testament writings, meant nothing and were not understood to mean anything, until Jesus Christ came along, and these Jewish and Pagan mummeries were seized upon by the avid forging Christians to make up and pad out the pretended life and wondrous acts of the Christ. Even a cursory examination and the marginal cross-references will demonstrate, that virtually every act imputed in the New Testament Gospels to the Nazarene, was cut to fit of some scrap of mummery or pretended "prophecy" of Hebrew Scriptures and Sibylline Oracles. Of numberless instances of the latter quoted in the *Divine Institutes*, a few typical ones only can be here cited, but they are illuminating of the Christ-tales.

In Book I, chapter vi is entitled, "Of Divine Testimonies, and of the Sibyls and their Predictions." Appealing for faith to Constantine, the chapter begins: "Now let us pass to divine testimonies"; and

he cites and quotes, in numerous chapters, the Pagan gods Mercury, Hermes Trismegistus, Apollo, and other mythic deities and personages, all testifying to the One Christian God and to his Son Jesus. After infinite such appeals for proofs, we come to Book IV, a veritable arsenal of manufactured "divine testimonies"; and we pause to con with wonder chapter xv, "Of the Life and Miracles of Jesus, and Testimonies concerning Him." Jesus, after his baptism, says Lactantius, "began to perform the greatest miracles, not by magical powers, but by heavenly strength and power. . . . His powers were those which *Apollo called* wonderful. . . . And he performed all these things not by His hands, or the application of any remedy, but by His word and command, as the *Sibyl* had foretold: 'Doing all things by His word, and healing every disease.' "

Many chapters are replete with instances of the miracles of Jesus, alleged each of them to have been foretold by one or another of the Sibyls, and quoting the Christian-forged prophetic verses in proof. The Christ came to fulfill the Law; "and the Sibyl shows that it would come to pass that this law would be destroyed by the Son of God: 'But when all these things which I told you shall be accomplished, then all the law is fulfilled with respect to Him.' " (c. xvii.) Of a few others, and the arguments above sketched, I quote the text:

"What can be more wonderful, either in narration or in action? But the Sibyl had before foretold that it would take place, whose verses are related to this effect:

> 'With five loaves at the same time, and with two fishes,
> He shall satisfy five thousand men in the wilderness;
> And afterwards taking all the fragments that remain,
> He shall fill twelve baskets to the hope of many.'

"But perhaps the sacred writings speak falsely when they teach that there was such power in Him, that by His command He compelled the winds to obey Him, the seas to serve Him, diseases to depart, the dead to be submissive. Why should I say that the Sibyls before had taught the same things in their verses? one of whom, already mentioned, thus speaks:

> 'He shall still the winds by His word, and calm the sea
> As it rages, treading with feet of peace and in faith.'

"And again another which says:

'He shall walk on the waves, He shall release men from disease. 1
He shall raise the dead, and drive away many pains;
And from the bread of one wallet there shall be a satisfying [of men].'

"Some, *refuted by these testimonies,* are accustomed to have recourse to the assertion that these poems were not by the Sibyls, but made up and composed by our own writers. But he will assuredly not think this who has read Cicero [*De Natura Deorum,* ii], and Varro, and other ancient writers, who make mention of the Erythræan and the other Sibyls from whose books we bring forth these examples; and these authors died before the birth of Christ according to the flesh. But I do not doubt that these poems were in former times regarded as ravings, since no one understood them. For they announced some marvellous wonders, of which neither the manner, nor the time, nor the author was signified. Lastly the Erythræan Sibyl says that it would come to pass that she would be called mad and deceitful. But assuredly

'They will say that the Sibyl
Is mad, and deceitful: but when all things shall come to pass,
Then ye will remember me; and no one will any longer
Say that I, the prophetess of the great God, am mad.'

"Therefore they were neglected for many ages; but they received attention *after* the nativity and passion of Christ had revealed secret things. Thus it was also with the utterances of the prophets, which were read by the people of the Jews for fifteen hundred [!] years and more, but yet *were not understood* until after Christ had explained them by His word and by His works. For the prophets spoke of Him; nor could the things which they said have been in any way understood, *unless* they had been altogether fulfilled." (Lact., *Div. Inst.,* Bk. IV, chap. xv; *ANF.* vii, 115, 116.)

In view of these "divine testimonies" of Pagan Oracles forged by pious Christians in proof of their Christ, need one wonder that the like testimonies in the Gospels themselves may be under suspicion of like forgery? We shall have the proofs in their due order. Father Justin Martyr treats these Pagan books of Christian evidences, as prophetic Scriptures and divine, and speaking of their prohibition by the Roman Emperors, says: "By the contrivance of Demons it was made a capital crime to read them, in order to deter men from coming to a knowledge of what is good." (*Apologia,* I, ch. 77; *ANF.* i, 178.)

That heathens and even devils may be specially endued with the

gift of prophecy by God for his glory, and God may make use of the Devil-in-Chief for this purpose, is expressly asserted by Pope Benedict XIV (*Heroic Virtue*, III, 144, 150). And "the Angelic Doctor," St. Thomas Aquinas, "in order to prove that the heathens were capable of prophecy, refers to the instance of the Sibyls, who make clear mention of the mysteries of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of the Word, of the Life, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ. It is true that the Sibylline poems now extant became in course of time interpolated; but as Benedict XIV (1740–1758) remarks, this does not hinder much of them, *especially what the early Fathers referred to*, from being *genuine and in no wise apocryphal"!* (*CE.* xii, 474.)

Thus the Holy Ghost of God, speaking through its official mouthpiece, its Vice-God on earth, infallibly guarded by the Spirit against the possibility of error, in the year 1742 of our Era of Christ, sings the Doxology of these admitted frauds of paganish and forging Christianity, and canonizes them as the God-inspired origin of the holiest mysteries of Christian revelation. The inference is inevitable, that Pagan Sibyls, Christian Church Fathers, and Vicars of God, are strongly characterized by Ignorance and Imposture.

A noted classical and critical authority, Anthon, contemplating the shifts of the new Christianity rising from the débâcle of Paganism, falls into a philosophical reflection, pertinent alike to the old and the new systems of priestcraft:

"When a religion has fallen and been succeeded by another, the more zealous advocates of the new belief sometimes find themselves in a curious state of embarrassment. So it is with regard to the heathen system and the Christian code. Among the numerous oracles given to the world in former days, some have chanced to find a remarkable accomplishment; and the pious but ill-judging Christian, unable to ascribe them to deities in whom man no longer believes, is driven to create for them a different origin. 'God,' says Rollin, 'in order to punish the blindness of the heathen, sometimes permits evil spirits to give responses conformable to the truth.' (Rollin, *Histoire Ancienne*, I, 387.) The only evil spirit which had an agency in the oracular responses of antiquity was *that spirit of crafty imposture which finds so congenial a home among an artful and cunning priesthood.*" (Anthon, *Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed., p. 929; Art. *Oraculum.*)

PAGAN FRAUDS—CHRISTIAN PRECEDENTS

The historian of European Morals, in his amazing review of the infinite variety and number of superstitions, frauds, forgeries, false miracles and lying oracles of Pagandom, which were taken over almost *en masse* by the Christians, and implicitly and with childlike credulity accepted and believed, taught and preached by every Christian Father of the Church, by the infallible popes, and the millions of their ignorant and superstitious ex-Pagan lay dupes, makes this very pertinent and just remark apropos the value of their pious opinions, testimonies and "traditions" of the origins of the Christian faith:

"To suppose that men who held these opinions were capable, in the second and third centuries, of ascertaining with any degree of just confidence whether miracles had taken place in Judæa in the first century, is grossly absurd; nor would the conviction of their reality have made any great impression on their minds at a time when miracles were supposed to be so abundantly diffused." (Lecky, *Hist. Europ. Morals,* i, 375.)

The confession that the vast mass of Christian miracles were Pagan frauds and lies taken *en bloc* over into Christianity to make a good showing as against the Pagans and to dupe the superstitious new converts, is made by *CE.*, with the notable further admission that the only alteration made was that the Pagan gods were made over into Christian saints: "This transference was promoted by the numerous cases in which *Christian saints became the successors of local deities,* and Christian worship supplanted the ancient local worship. This explains the great number of similarities between gods and saints. For the often maintained metamorphosis of gods into saints no proof is to be found." This immense confession of Christian fraudulency and imposture, in conjuring fictitious Pagan gods—which according to Christian faith were all *actual devils,*—into canonized *Saints of God* and Holy Church, is several times repeated by *CE.*, of which this instance is before me: "It has indeed been said that the 'Saints are the successors to the Gods.' Instances have been cited . . . of *statues of pagan Gods baptized and transformed into Christian Saints"!* (*CE.* xv, 710; cf. *Is It God's Word?* 5, 7–9.) This truly wonderful psycho-religious miracle is thereupon wrought: The idolatrous Pagan who just before the "baptism" actually *worshipped* these "statues of the Pagan gods," immediately afterwards simply *venerated* or *adored*

the same gods "baptized and transformed into Christian saints,"—fully comprehending the non-understandable hair-splitting theological distinction between pious "*dulia*" and idolatrous "*latria*," as defined by Holy Church and droned by *CE.* in its article on Idolatry. And vast hordes of utterly illiterate and stupid Faithful go into the True Churches every day, kneel before and pray to these same Pagan gods conjured into Christian saints—with countless other counterfeit near-divinities of their near-Idolatry—and appreciate the difference to a split-second of devotion and true Faith. 'Tis passing strange.

A very remarkable confession of purposeful fraud, with the mechanics of the fraud, and the vast extent of it in faking Pagan miracle-lies into Christian truth of the most driveling nonsense, reads:

"Manifold as the varieties of [miracle] legends now seem to be, there are fundamentally not so very many different notions utilized. The legend considers the saint as a kind of lord of the elements, who commands the water, rain, fire, mountain, and rock; he changes, enlarges, or diminishes objects; flies through the air; delivers from dungeons—(examples, *Peter, Paul*)—and gallows; takes part in battles, and even in martyrdom is invulnerable; animals, the wildest and the most timid, serve him (*e. g.*, the stories of the bear as a beast of burden; the ring in the fish; the frogs becoming silent, etc.); his birth is glorified by a miracle; a voice, or letters, from Heaven proclaim his identity—[all these score for Jesus the Christ]; bells ring of themselves; the heavenly ones enter into personal intercourse with him (betrothal of Mary); he speaks with the dead and beholds heaven, hell, and purgatory; forces the devil to release people from compacts; he is victorious over dragons; etc. Of all this the *authentic* [?] Christian narratives know nothing—[a confession that every saint-tale of Bible and Church is a lie].

"But whence does this world of fantastic concepts arise? A glance at *the pre-Christian religious narratives will dispel every doubt. All* these stories are anticipated by the Greek chroniclers, writers of myths, collectors of strange tales, neo-Platonism, and neo-Pythagorism. One need only refer to the *'Ellados Periegesis'* of Pausanius, or glance through the codices collected by Photius in his *'Bibliotheca,'* to recognize what great importance was attached to the *reports of miracles* in antiquity by both the educated and uneducated." . . .

Reversing only the order of the sentences, and *CE.* reversing the truth of the answer it gives to its own question, the confession of shame continues:

"But how was the transference of [these miracle] legends to Christianity consummated? . . . Hellenism had already recognized this [fraudulent] characteristic of the religious fable, and would thus have been obliged to free itself from it in the course of time, had not *the competition with Christianity* forced the champions of the ancient polytheism to seek again in the ancient fables incidents to set against the miraculous power of Christ. [!] In this way *popular illusions found their way from Hellenism to Christianity.*" (*CE.* ix, 129–30.)

And in 1900 years no priest, bishop, pope, depositaries and guardians of divine truth, has ever said a word to prevent or put end to this shameful prostitution of mind of their poor grovelling dupes, but to this day perpetuate them in it. Far from ending the shameful thing, many bishops and popes have won the title *Mendax Maximus* by peddling these Pagan lies as God's truth; as witness this one instance from the article we are quoting: "St. Augustine (*De Cura*, xii) and also [Pope] St. Gregory the Great (Dialogues, IV, xxxvi) —[the greatest book of Lies outside the Bible]—relate of a man, who died by an error of the Angel of Death and was again restored to life, the same story which is already given by Lucian in his 'Philopseudes.' " (*Ib.* p. 130.) Such, verily for shame, is "that new Paganism later called Christianity."

Mythology has well been called the Theology of dead religions. The world is a vast cemetery of deceased gods and teeming scrap-heap of decayed and discarded priest-imposed religious beliefs—superstitions. All the dead gods and religions of Paganism, all the yet surviving but fast moribund deities and faiths of the XXth Century world, all—(except—the Jews and Christians say, their own),—*all* were admittedly the fraudulent handiwork of priests and professional god-and-myth makers. In a word, short and ugly, but true—every priest of every god and religion (saving, for the nonce, the Jewish-Christian ones)—was a conscious and unconscionable falsifier and impostor,—a common liar for his god. All plied their artful, unholy priestcraft in the name of gods for power and pelf, those grafting Pagan priests. No Christian will, or truthfully can, deny this portentous fact. The verdict of lying guilt of Pagan Priestcraft is unanimous.

No one can now doubt that Lecky, after voluminous review of pre-

Christian frauds and impostures, spoke the precise historical truth: "Christianity floated into the Roman Empire on the wave of credulity that brought with it this long train of Oriental superstitions and legends." (*Hist. of European Morals*, i, 373–4.)

The mainstream of Oriental superstition and priestly imposture will now be seen to swell with the turgid flood of Hebrew fables and forgery, before pouring the mingled flood of myth and fraud into the pure tide of Christian Truth;—where, Presto! change! it is beheld transformed—"baptized"—into the "revealed mysteries" and "Catholic Truth" of God!

CHAPTER II

HEBREW HOLY FORGERIES

"Hinneh lash-sheqer asah et sheqer sepharim—Behold, the lying pen of the scribes hath wrought lies." *Jeremiah,* viii, 8.

SUNDRY HOLY HEBREW men of old, we are told on the authority of the name of the *pseudo*-first Jewish-Christian Pope, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter, i, 21). These literary movings of the Spirit were sometime reduced to writing in "Sacred Scriptures"; and again later Christian authority assures: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii, 16),—though this is a falsified rendition; the true reading is: "Every scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired," as the original Greek text is quoted by Father Tertullian. (*ANF.* iv, 16.)

It is the popular supposition that the 66—(Catholic Bible 73)—"little books" which comprise the Bible as we know it, are the whole sum of Hebrew and Christian "sacred writings," which have claimed and have been accorded the sanction of Divine inspiration and "treated by the Church as canonical." The term "canonical" in ecclesiastical parlance means Books accepted as divinely inspired; books which "were definitely *canonized,* or adjudged to have a uniquely Divine or authoritative quality," as is the authorative definition. (*CE.* iii, 267.) "Canonicity depends on inspiration." (*EB.* i, 653.) The holy Hebrew "canon" was closed, or the last inspired Book of the Old Testament written, according to Jewish "Tradition," by Ezra, about 444 B. C. (*Ib.* i, 658, 662.) In truth, however, several of the Books of the Old Testament were written much later, and were never heard of by Ezra; and "some found their way in, others not, on grounds of taste—the taste of the period," says Wellhausen. (*Einleitung,* p. 652, 6th Ed.)

The popular idea is that when the "moving" of the above inspired

66 sacred writings was ended, the moving Spirit retired from the field of Hebrew, and later of Christian literature, and thus closed the "sacred canon" of the respective Hebrew and Christian Testaments. This will be seen to be a mistake, in the judgment of the True Christian Church, according to which the Jews evidently did not know their own inspired writings, and curiously omitted from their "canon" a number of divinely "moved" books and scraps of books, which the better-instructed Christian Church has adopted as full of inspiration into its own present official Bible, as we shall notice in its place. There is also a much greater number of such books, of both Hebrew and Christian origin, which the inspired Church formerly and for ages regarded as inspired and "canonical," but which it now repudiates as "apocryphal" and acknowledges as forgeries; as we shall also duly note.

There is, indeed, an immense mass of religious writings, the work of Jewish or Christian priests or professional religious persons, or composite productions of both sets of forgers, which are generally known as "apocrypha" or pious forgeries; but which each and all have been held by the Church through many ages of faith as of the highest inspired sanctity and accredited with the full rank of "canonical" truth of God.

The term apocryphal or forged "takes in those compositions which profess to have been written either by Biblical personages or men in intimate relation with them." (*CE.* i, 601.) "Since these [apocryphal] books were *forgeries*, the epithet in common parlance today denotes any story or document which is false or spurious; . . . apocryphal in the disparaging sense of *bearing names to which they have no right;* all come under the definition above, *for each of them has at one time or another been treated as canonical.*" (*EB.* i, 249–250.)

That the above 66 (or 73) Books of the accepted Bible of Christianity come exactly, both as to manner of spurious origin and matter of fictional content, within the above definition of apocrypha or forgery, shall be made exceedingly evident. A brief review of these acknowledged religious forgeries in the name of God and of his inspired biographers, will afford a curious and instructive study of the workings of the fervid, credulous and contorted priestly mind, reck-

less of truth, and shed a floodlight of understanding on the origins and incredibility of the so-called "canonical" Books of the Bible, Hebrew and Christian alike.

While speaking here immediately of the Jewish Apocrypha or pious forgeries, it is to be noted and borne in mind that it is the Holy-Ghost-guided True Christian Church which alone has accepted and cherished these spurious productions of Jewish priestcraft—(scornfully repudiated by the Jews), has adulterated and re-forged them to more definite deceptive purposes of Christian propaganda, and has outdone Jewry by adding innumerable like forgeries,—"a whole literature" of fabrications—to its own spurious hagiographa, or sacred writings. There will thus occur some necessary and unavoidable over-lappings of Jewish and Christian forgeries in the course of our treatment.

"It must be confessed," admits the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "that the early Fathers and the Church, during the first three centuries, were more indulgent towards Jewish pseudographs [*i. e.* forged writings] circulating under venerable Old Testament names. The Book of Henoch [Enoch] and the Assumption of Moses had been cited by the canonical Epistle of Jude. Many Fathers admitted the inspiration of Fourth Esdras. Not to mention the Shepherd of Hermas, the Acts of St. Paul (at least in the Thecla portion) and the Apocalypse of St. Peter were highly revered at this and later periods. . . . In the Middle Ages . . . many pseudographic [*i. e.* forged] writings enjoyed a high degree of favor among both clerics and laity." (*CE.* i, 615.)

A curious and edifying side-light on the chronic clerical flair for forgery is thrown by a sentence from the paragraph above quoted from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. The earliest papal decree condemning certain of these pious forgeries is itself a Christian forgery! "The so-called '*Decretum de recipiendis et non recipiendis libris*,' which contained a catalogue of some half-hundred works condemned as apocryphal, was attributed to Pope Gelasius (495), but, in reality is a compilation dating from the beginning of the sixth century." (*CE.* i, 615.)

And, be it noted, these Christian forgeries were not at all condemned by the Church *as* forgeries and pious lies, but simply because

they contained some dogmatic doctrines which were regarded by the Orthodox as "heresies"; they were condemned "always, however, with a preoccupation against heresy." And again in the same article: "Undoubtedly it was the large use heretical circles, especially the Gnostics, made of this insinuating literature, which first called out the animadversions of the official guardians of doctrinal purity." (*Ib.* p. 615.)

The same authority cautiously and clerically explains, that "ancient literature, especially in the Orient, used methods much more free and elastic than those permitted by our modern and occidental culture. Pseudographic [falsified] composition was in vogue among the Jews in the two centuries before Christ and for some time later. This holds good for the so-called 'Wisdom of Solomon,' written in Greek and belonging to the Church's sacred canon.—[This admits that this book of the Catholic Bible is spurious.] In other cases, where the assumed name did not stand as a symbol of a type of a certain kind of literature, the *intention* was not without a degree of at least literary *dishonesty*." (*Ib.* p. 601.)

Apocryphal religious literature consists of several classes, one of the most important subdivisions being that designated as "apocalyptic," and which consists of "pretended prophecies and revelations of both Jewish and Christian authorship, and dating from about 200 B. C. to about 150 A. D.," the latter being the approximate date of the now "canonical" Books of the New Testament. Their general subject is the problem of the final triumph of what is called the Kingdom of God. Speaking particularly of the apocalypses, the best known of which are the Hebrew Book of Daniel, written about 165 B. C., and the Jewish-Christian Book of Revelation imputed to the Apostle John of Patmos, a recent secular authority (corroborated at all points by clerical authorities) points out that many if not all of the Jewish apocalypses are adulterated with "alterations and interpolations by Christian hands, making the alleged predictions point more definitely to Jesus," which pious tampering "gave certain of these Jewish works a very wide circulation in the early Church. . . . The revelations and predictions *are set forth as though actually received and written or spoken by ancient worthies, as Enoch, Moses, etc.* . . . They were once widely accepted as genuine prophecies, and

found a warm reception in Jewish and early Christian circles." (*The New International Encyclopedia*, vol. i, p. 745.) This form of pious fraud is admitted as quite the expected thing: "Naturally basing itself upon the Pentateuch and the Prophets, it clothed itself fictitiously with the authority of a patriarch or prophet who was made to reveal the transcendent future" (*CE.* i, 602),—most usually long *ex post facto.*

The vast and varied extent of Jewish-Christian forgery of religious books is shown by the groupings under which the several kinds of apocrypha forgeries are quite exhaustively considered in the technical works treating of them, such as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, as well as the more popular *Britannica* and *New International* Encyclopedias, where the subject is fully discussed. "Speaking broadly," says the first, "The Apocrypha of Jewish origin are coextensive with what are styled of the Old Testament, and those of Christian origin with the apocrypha of the New Testament. The subject will be treated ["according to their origin"]—as follows: (I) Apocrypha of Jewish origin; (II) Jewish apocrypha with Christian accretions; (III) apocrypha of Christian origin, comprising (1) apocryphal Gospels; (2) Pilate literature and other apocrypha concerning Christ; (3) apocryphal Acts of Apostles; (4) apocryphal doctrinal works; (5) apocryphal Epistles; (6) apocryphal Apocalypses; (IV) the apocrypha and the Church." (*CE.* i, 601.)

What a catalogue of confessed ecclesiastical forgery and fraud in the name of God, Christ and his Apostles, and the Church of God, for the propaganda of priestly frauds as "our Most Holy Faith"!

What will probably—in view of the foregoing and what is yet to come—be appreciated by many as a peculiarly rare bit of apocrypha (in its secondary sense), is the following, uttered apparently with the due and usual ecclesiastical solemnity, in the celebrated *Dictatus* of Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085), stating the presumptuous pretenses of the Papacy:

> "*The Roman Church has never erred, nor will it err to all eternity.* No one may be considered a Catholic Christian who does not agree with the Catholic Church. No book is authoritative unless it has received the papal sanction. . . .

"The pope is the only person whose feet are to be kissed by all princes"; "the Pope may depose emperors and absolve subjects from allegiance to an unjust ruler." (Cited by Robinson, *The Ordeal of Civilization,* pp. 126, 128; *Library of Original Sources,* vol. iv, p. 320–321.)

This puts the stamp of canonical inspiration and verity on some dozen Jewish books and parts of books of the Catholic Bible which the Jews and the whole body of otherwise discordant sects of Protestants hesitate not unanimously to pronounce apocryphal and forged. These "apocrypha" are either entire rejected Jewish books, all doubtless with Christian "interpolations," or apocryphal chapters or parts, interpolated probably by the same industry into the equally apocryphal books of the accepted Jewish canon. The names of these books, originals and interpolations, and which are not included in the Hebrew Old Testament,—but are in the True Church Bible,—are: Tobit, Judith, Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus), I and II Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh, Additions to Esther, and Additions to the Book of Daniel, consisting of the Prayer of Azarias, the Song of the Three Holy Children (in the Fiery Furnace), the History of Susannah, the History of Bel and the Dragon, and sundry such precious fables. (See *CE.* iii, pp. 267, 270; iv, 624, *passim.*) These are all included in the Greek Septuagint and in the Latin Vulgate, were read as Scripture in the early Christian Church, and were declared by the Council of Trent, at its Fourth Session, in 1546,—under the Curse of God on all skeptical doubters,—to be "inspired and canonical"; and they are so held by the Roman, and some of the Greek and Oriental Catholic Churches, but are declared "apocrypha" and forged by Jewry and all the rest of Christendom. To several of these *extra*-revelations of Judaism included in the Christian True Bible, head-notes apologetic for their inclusion are attached, of which that to the celebrated Book of Tobit or Tobias is typical: "Protestants have left it out of their modern Bibles, alleging that it is not in the canon of the Jews. But the Church of Christ, which received the Scriptures not from the Jews, but from the Apostles of Christ,—[who were all Jews, to believe the Christian record]—by traditions from them, has allowed this book a place in the Christian [*sic*] Bible from the beginning." (See Cath.

Bible, *Tobit, et passim*). We may admire in synopsis the divine inspiration of

THE INSPIRED FABLE OF TOBIT

This Book of Tobit, or Tobias, scoffed both by Jews and Protestants as a ridiculous fable, but held by all True Believers as a precious revelation of God, to disbelieve which is to be damned, is a veritable treasure-trove of exalted heavenly inspiration, for the preservation of which Jew and Gentile alike may be dubiously grateful to the pious "tradition" of the Apostles of Christ, as above said. This Tobias was a very pious and stubborn Israelite of the Captivity, who, before departing, had câched all his available cash with his kinsman Gabelus, of Rages, a city of the Medes, "taking a note of his hand" for its repayment on demand. While captive in a strange and pagan land, Tobias was visited by a piteous calamity, for "as he was sleeping, hot dung out of a swallow's nest fell upon his eyes, and he was made blind"; which affliction Tobias looked reverently to the Lord as visiting upon him as "revenge for my sins"; as a result Tobias became extremely poor, and his wife took in work. At that time there lived in the city of Rages another pious Israelite by name Raguel, who had a marriageable—or rather muchly married daughter, Sara, who was under grave reproach and even imputation of murder, "Because she had been given to seven husbands, and a devil named Asmodeus had killed them, at their first going in unto her," so that she complained that though sevenfold a widow she remained yet a virgin.

At this juncture Tobias bethought himself of the good money he had left with Gabelus of Rages, and after much palaver decided to send his son, Tobias, Jr., a comely youth, with the note of hand in his pocket, and his dog (name unrevealed), on the long journey to recoup the fortune of ten talents of silver. As Tobias, Jr. started on the journey, a beautiful young man, who was really the Archangel Raphael, met him and introduced himself as Azarias, son of Ananias,—(Ananias must have written the account)—and offered to accompany and guide him upon his journey, which offer was gratefully accepted. As the two journeyed they came to the river Tigris; Tobias waded in to wash his feet, when, lo, "a monstrous fish came up to devour him," whereat Tobias called to his companion for help. The Angel told

him to take the monster fish by the gill and haul him out, which Tobias seems to have had no trouble in doing. The Angel then directed Tobias to open the yet live and "panting" fish, "and lay up his heart, his gall, and his liver, for thee; for these are necessary for useful medicines"; this done, they cooked the fish and carried it all along for provisions for the trip. As they journeyed, Tobias asked the Angel what these medicinal scraps were good for; "and the Angel answering said, If thou put a little piece of its heart upon coals, the smoke thereof driveth away all kinds of devils, either from man or from woman, so that they come no more to them. And the gall is good for anointing the eyes, in which there is a white speck, and they shall be cured."

So discoursing pleasantly and instructively, the twain arrived at Rages; and the Angel guided Tobias straight to the house of Raguel and his daughter Sara, his sole heiress, and told Tobias to ask for her in marriage. Tobias said that he was afraid of Sara, for he had heard of what happened to those seven other men; but the Angel reassured him, that he would show him how to overcome the devil Asmodeus; that he should marry Sara and go to bed with her for three nights, but should continently confine his activities "to nothing else but to prayers with her"; and, assured the Angel, on the first night "lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and the devil shall be driven away," other holy marvels happening on the succeeding nights; "and when the third night is past, thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust." The affair was arranged according to these prescriptions with Sara and her parents; after the wedding supper, the newlyweds were left alone in their boudoir; Tobias did nothing but pray and put a part of the fish liver in the fire, whereupon "the Angel Raphael took the devil, and bound him in the desert of Upper Egypt"; then both prayed some more, the fervid prayers being repeated verbatim. In the morning, Raguel, out of force of habit, called his servants and ordered them to go into the garden and dig an eighth grave for the reception of Tobias; when the maidservant went to the room to arrange for the removal of the corpse, she to her great surprise "found them safe and sound, sleeping both together." The empty grave was filled up, a big banquet prepared, and the happy bridal couple spent two weeks with the bride's family, while the Angel took the note of hand, went to Gabelus, collected the money,

and paid it over to Tobias; Raguel gave Tobias one-half of all his property, and executed a writing to give him one-half of the remainder upon the death of Raguel and wife. Tobias sent the Angel back to Gabelus, to invite him to his wedding, and the Angel made him come.

To proceed swiftly to the climax of marvel, Tobias and the Angel, leaving the hymeneal cortège to follow as best it could, with such impedimenta of wealth, hastened back to the home of Tobias, Sr., where blind father and the mother were in great grief over the supposed loss of their son and the money with him. But at the behest of the Angel, Tobias, Jr. ran into the house, though "the dog, which had been with them in the way, ran before, and coming as if he had brought the news, showed his joy by his fawning and wagging his tail," an act which has since become habitual with dogs which have enough tail to wag. After kissing his mother and father, as the Angel had suggested, Tobias, Jr. took the remaining fish gall out of his traveling bag, and anointed with it the eyes of his father; "and he stayed about half an hour; and a white skin began to come out of his eyes, like the skin of an egg. And Tobias took hold of it, and drew it from his eyes, and immediately he recovered his sight. And they glorified God," and Tobias, Sr. dutifully said, "I bless thee, Lord God of Israel, because thou hast chastised me, and thou hast saved me: and behold I see Tobias my son." Then, "after seven days Sara his son's wife, and all the family arrived safe, and the cattle, and the camels, and an abundance of money of his wife's, and that money also which he had received of Gabelus"; they all feasted for seven days "and rejoiced with all great joy"; then, when Tobias, Sr. suggested doing something handsome for the "holy man" through whom all their good fortune had come, the Angel introduced himself as really not Azariah, son of Ananias, but "The Angel Raphael, one of the Seven, who stand before the Lord"; and he explained, "I seemed indeed to eat, and to drink with you, but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men"; thereupon in true angel style he dissipated into thin air and they could see him no more. The whole Tobias family then, "lying prostrate for three hours upon their face, blessed God: and rising up they told all his wonderful works." Thus endeth happily the reading of the lesson, dictated by the Holy Ghost to the pious Ananias who

recorded it for the edification of True Believers. Let us pray that it is true.

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

Until the Council of Trent, in 1546, there was no infallibly defined sanction of inspiration of these Jewish "apocrypha"; like the "canon" sacred Books of the Hebrew Bible, all alike were more or less eclectically accepted and used in the True Church; but, as said: "The Tridentine decree from which the above list is extracted was the first infallible and effectually promulgated pronouncement on the Canon, addressed to the Church universal. Being dogmatic in its purport, it *implies* that the Apostles bequeathed the same Canon to the Church as a part of the *depositum fidei*. . . . We should search the pages of the New Testament *in vain* for any trace of such action. . . . We affirm that such a status *points to Apostolic sanction*, which in turn *must have* rested on revelation either by Christ *or* the Holy Spirit." (*CE.* iii, 270.)

This is luminous clerical reasoning: a lot of anonymous Jewish fables, derided by Jews and all the rest of the world for want of even common plausibility of fact or truth, and as to which the "inspired" Christian Books said to emanate from Apostles, are silent as the grave, are declared after 1500 years to have the ear-marks of Apostolic sanction, which "must have" been founded on divine revelation to them "either by Christ *or* the Holy Spirit,"—which the Church claims are one and the same Person; and it is curious that the "infallible" Council couldn't say which was which, but vaguely and uncertainly opined it *must have been* one *or* the other. So much for infallible cock-suredness as to "inspiration" of Holy Scriptures. Even the Old Testament itself, says our logician of inspiration, "reveals no formal notion of inspiration," though, again, "the later Jews *must have* possessed the idea." (*Ib.* p. 269.) The cursory notice which we shall take of the Old Testament books will serve to confirm that they reveal no notion at all of inspiration; that the later Jews *must have had the idea* that they were inspired, does not much help the case for them.

In addition to these rejected Jewish books admitted into full canonical fellowship by the inerrant True Church, there are several other

Jewish apocrypha which are only semi-canonical and admitted into a sort of bar-sinister fellowship with the legitimates. They have a place in the Orthodox Bible for the "edification" of the Faithful, but are usually printed in the Appendix as suggestive to the devout that they will not be damned for not fully believing these particular forgeries.

Among these are two very celebrated books forged in the name of the great Restorer of Israel, Ezra, under the titles of *Third* and *Fourth Esdras*, as the name is written in the True Bibles. "Third Esdras," says the *Encyclopedia*, "is one of the three uncanonical books appended to the official edition of the Vulgate. . . . It enjoyed exceptional favor in the early ages of the Church, being *quoted as Scripture with implicit faith* by the leading Greek and Latin Fathers." (*CE.* i, 605.) In like errant faith was regarded its companion forgery, *Fourth Esdras*, of which the same ecclesiastical authority says: "The personage serving as the screen of the author of this book is Esdras (Ezra). . . . Both Greek and Latin Fathers cite it as prophetical. . . . Notwithstanding this widespread reverence for it in early times, it is a *REMARKABLE FACT* that the book never got a foothold in the Canon or liturgy of the Church . . . and even after the Council of Trent, together with Third Esdras, it was placed in the appendix to the official edition of the Vulgate. . . . The dominant critical dating assigns it to a Jew writing in the reign of Domitian, A. D. 81–98,"—the "screen" Ezra being gathered to his fathers since about 444 B. C. (*Ib.* p. 603–604; v, 537–8; *EB.* i, 653, 1393.) It is curious that it is regarded as "remarkable" that the Holy Ghost did not "fall" for this particular forgery, when it did for so many others!

EZRA "RESTORES" THE LAW

A remarkable apocryphal tale relating to the Hebrew Scriptures is enshrined by pseudo-inspiration in chapter 14 of this Fourth of Esdras, regarding the miraculous restoration of Hebrew Holy Writ after its total perishment. In the calamity of the capture and destruction of the Holy City by Nebuchadnezzar, 586 B. C., the Temple of Solomon was destroyed, together with the entire collection of the

sacred Rolls of Scriptures, so that not a scratch of inspired pen remained to tell the tale of theocratic Hebrew history and its "revealed" religion. This inconsolable and apparently irreparable loss afflicted the holy People all the time of the Babylonian captivity. But upon their return to the restored City of God, and over a century after their loss, God, we are told in Fourth Esdras, inspired Ezra and commissioned him to reproduce the sacred lost Books, which, judging from the result of his inspired labors, were many more than the supposed twenty and two of the supposed old Hebrew Canon. Accordingly Ezra, employing five scribes, dictated to them (from inspired memory) the textual contents of the lost sacred Books, and in just forty days and nights reproduced a total of 94 sacred books, of which he designated 24 as the sacred canon, the remaining 70 being termed esoteric and reserved for the use of only the wisest. This inspired fable was eagerly accepted for truth by the early Church Fathers, many of whom, from Irenæus on, "admitted its inspiration"; and it was frequently quoted and commented on as canonical by such Church luminaries as Tertullian, St. Ambrose, Clement Alexandrensis, Origen, Eusebius, St. Jerome, *et als.*, and was prevalently accepted as Scripture throughout the scholastic period. (*EB.* i, 654, 1392–94; *CE.* i, 537–8, 601, 615.)

This legend, however, had, through a better understanding of "the powers of ordinary human memory," quite faded out by the time of the Reformation, but only to make way for a more modern and rationalistic one, invented by the Jew Levita, who died in 1549. According to his new fable, Ezra and the Talmudic "Men of the Great Synagogue" simply united into one volume the 24 books which until that time had circulated separately, and divided them into the three great divisions yet recognized, of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa or holy writings. This fabulous statement of Levita "became the authoritative doctrine of the orthodoxy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." (*EB.* i, 654.) This new legend is cited simply to show how prone is the credulous clerical mind to accept as truth the most baseless fables; and how, when one of their precious bubbles of faith is pricked by tardy exposure or common sense, they eagerly catch at the next which comes floating by.

THE "FINDING OF THE LAW"

Another ancient priestly fiction, which to this day passes current among the credulous as inspired truth of God, is the fabled "finding of the Law" as recorded in the Word of God. We are all familiar with the notable "finding" by the late lamented Prophet Joseph Smith—thereto led by the Angel Moroni—of the golden plates containing the hieroglyphic text of Book of Mormon, near Palmyra, N. Y. in 1823–1827. (*Book of Mormon*, Introd.) History repeated itself. A like remarkable discovery was made in the year 621 B. C., this time by a priest, with the help of a witch or lady fortune-teller. As related in 2 Kings xxii, corroborated by 2 Chronicles xxxiv, in the eighteenth year of the "good king" Josiah of Judah, while some repair work was being done in the Temple, Hilkiah the priest of a sudden "found the book of the law of Yahveh given by Moses," over 800 years before, and never heard of since. Hilkiah called in Shaphan the scribe, and they took the great "find" to Josiah the King. To verify the veracity of the high-priest, Huldah the lady prophet was consulted; being intimately familiar with the sentiments of God, she at once declared that Yahveh was very angry about it, "because," as the King said, "our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do after all that is written in this book"; and the King at once set about to carry into effect the laws prescribed in Deuteronomy,—just then for the first time in the history of Israel ever heard of or acted upon. This "book of the law given to Moses" 800 years before was doubtless the priestly work of Hilkiah, palmed off under the potent name of Moses to force its very reluctant observance and belief on the superstitious Jews. That this is the fact is the consensus of the scholars, as summarized in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, and any modern work of O. T. criticism. An examination of the Bible texts themselves, as made in my previous work, demonstrates that this holy "Law of Moses" was totally unknown and unobserved through all the history of Israel from its beginnings until Josiah, and was then composed by his priests and enlarged into the present Pentateuch during and after the captivity in Babylon.

THE "SEPTUAGINT" TRANSLATION INTO GREEK

As priestly forged tales were fabricated to account for the origin and preservation of the sacred Hebrew Books, so like pious fraud was adopted to account for their very notable translation into Greek, in what is known as the Septuagint Version. After the conquests by Alexander the Great and his establishment of the city of Alexandria in Egypt, immense numbers of Jews were settled in the new city, which quickly became the commercial and intellectual center of the ancient world, with Greek the universal language. The holy Hebrew language had become a dead language to the Jews of the "Dispersion"; their synagogue services could not be conducted in the mother tongue. The Alexandrian Jews were accordingly under necessity to render the "Law" into Greek for their public use; and this was gradually done by such of them as thought themselves able to do such work. But this common-place mode of rendering the sacred Hebrew into a Gentile speech did not satisfy the pious wonder-craving Jewish mind. Accordingly, somewhere about 200 B. C., an anonymous Jew invented a more satisfactory tale, which has had incalculable influence on the Christian faith and dogmas. This pious Israelite had the customary recourse to religious forgery; he forged a letter in the name of one Aristeas, an official of Ptolemy II, Philadelphus, the Greek king of Egypt, 285–247 B. C., purporting to be addressed to his brother, Philocrates, and giving a marvelous history of the Translation.

Here, in substance, is what we read of the first origin of the Version, limited therein to the "Law" of Moses, as first related by Josephus. Ptolemy had recently established a library at Alexandria, which he purposed should contain a copy of every obtainable literary work extant. This Library became the most extensive and celebrated of the ancient world, containing some 700,000 manuscript books at the time it was savagely destroyed, in 391 A. D., by the benighted Christian zeal and fury of Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria and his crazy monks of Nitria, as related in Kingsley's *Hypatia* or any history of the times. (*CE.* xiv, 625.) At the suggestion of Demetrius, his Librarian, fables the pseudo-Aristeas through Josephus, that he should enrich the Library with a copy of the sacred Law of the Jews, Ptolemy wrote to Eleazar the chief priest at Jerusalem, sending the letter and mag-

nificent presents "to God" by the hand of a delegation including Aristeas, requesting a copy of the Law and a number of learned Jews competent to translate it into Greek. The embassy was successful; a richly ornamented copy of the holy Law, written in letters of gold, was sent to the King, together with seventy-two Doctors of Israel, deputed to deliver the Book and to carry out the wishes of the King. They were received with great honor, says pseudo-Aristeas, and duly fêted for several days; they were then conducted across the long causeway to the Island of Pharos to the place which was prepared for them, "which was a house that was built near the shore, and was a quiet place, and fit for their *discoursing together about their work.* . . . Accordingly they made an accurate interpretation, with great zeal and great pains," working until the ninth hour each day, and visiting Ptolemy every morning. "Now when the *Law* was transcribed, and the labour of interpretation was over, which came to its conclusion in seventy-two days," the work was read over to the assembled Jews, who rejoiced that "the interpretation was happily finished"; they were enjoined to report any *errors* or omissions which they might discover, to the "Seventy," who would make the necessary *corrections* in their work. (Josephus, *Antiq. Jews*, Bk. XII, chap. 2; *CE.* xiii, 722.) Thus the translation was only of "The Law," the Five Books of Moses; and it was open team-work, all the Seventy-two working together, comparing and discussing as they proceeded, and expressly enjoining the Jews to note and report for correction all errors of omission or commission which they might discover.

Thus the pseudo-Aristeas, as cited by Josephus; though, as a matter of fact, this Septuagint Version, so-called because of the legendary Seventy-(two), was in the grossest manner inaccurate, and imported innumerable errors into the Christian religion which was based upon and propagated for several centuries only through the Septuagint texts. Indeed, "the text of the Septuagint was regarded as so unreliable, because of its freedom in rendering, and of the alterations which had been introduced into it, etc., that, during the second century of our era it was discarded by the Church." (*CE.* iv, 625.) We shall notice the fearful error of Isaiah's "virgin-birth" text; for other well-known instances, it makes out Creation 1195 years earlier than the Hebrew and Vulgate, 4004 B. C., and the vener-

able Methuselah is made to survive the Flood by fourteen years.

Despite, however, its patently legendary character, the pseudo-Aristeas' account, the forged letter and the story, were eagerly accepted as genuine and authentic by Fathers, Popes and ecclesiastic writers until the sixteenth century, when their spurious character was revealed by the nascent modern criticism. "The authenticity of the letter, called in question first by Louis Vivés (1492–1540), professor at Louvain, is now universally denied." (*CE.* xiii, 722.)

The Fathers, however, could not rest content with this unvarnished original fabrication in the name of Aristeas, of an ordinary human and errant translation of the "Law"; they avidly set about embellishing it in the accepted clerical style, adding fanciful and lying details to emphasize the miraculous and inspired origin of the Version. As this notable instance serves admirably to illustrate the childish and uncritical credulity of the Fathers, their reckless disregard of truth, their chronic zest for any untruth or fable suitable to pander to the glory of God and enhance the pious superstition of the Faithful, let us here watch the growth of this simple human yarn of the Jewish Aristeas-forger into the wonderful and ever more embellished miracle as it passes from Father to Father,—exactly as the Gospel-fables grew from "Mark" to "John." According to Fathers Tertullian, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, *et als.*, the 72 were inspired by God each severally for the entire work; in translating they did not consult with one another; they had been shut up *incomunicados* in separate cells on Pharos, either singly or in pairs, and their several translations, when finished and compared, were found to agree entirely both as to sense and the expressions employed, with the original Hebrew text and with each other (St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Irenæus, Justin Martyr). Finally, the 72 translated not only the Law, but the entire Old Testament,—several of whose Books were not yet at the time written.

Father Justin Martyr adds near-eye-witness verification to the false and already embroidered history, saying that the "Seventy" were, by order of the King, "shut up in as many separate cells, and were obliged by him, each to translate the whole Bible apart, and without any communication with each other, yet all their several translations were found to agree verbatim from the beginning to the end, and were by that means demonstrated to be of divine inspira-

tion"; and he adds, for confirmation of faith!—like Paul, protesting he is not lying in anticipation of the accusation: "These things, ye men of Greece, are no fable, nor do we narrate fictions; but we ourselves having been in Alexandria, saw the remains of the little [cells] at the Pharos still preserved." (*Ad Græc.* ch. xiii; *ANF.* i, 278–9.) But in repeating the tale to the Roman Emperor, Father Justin makes the unhappy blunder of saying, that Ptolemy "sent to *Herod*, who was at that time king of the Jews, requesting that the books of the prophets [pseudo-Aristeas said the "Law"] be sent to him; and the king did indeed send them" (I *Apol.* ch. xxxi; *ANF.* i, 173); whereas Herod lived some 300 years after Ptolemy died. This forged fable is time and again repeated as sober truth. Bishop Saint Irenæus emphasizes the miraculous nature of the translation of *all* the Books, saying that when the 72 identical translations were compared, "God was indeed glorified, and the Scriptures were acknowledged as truly divine; . . . even the Gentiles present perceived that the Scriptures had been interpreted by the inspiration of God. And there was nothing astonishing in God having done this. . . . He inspired Esdras the priest (after the return from captivity) to recast all the words of the former prophets, and to re-establish with the people of God the Mosaic legislation." (*Adv. Hær.* III, xxi, 2; *ANF.* i, 451–2.)

In the course of a century or two before the Christian Era, the other Hebrew sacred books were likewise translated into Greek for the use of the Greek-speaking Jews of "the Dispersion," together with numbers of the forged Jewish apocrypha, and all these were added to the rolls of "Scriptures." This final and adulterated form of the Septuagint "was the vehicle which conveyed these additional Scriptures [*i. e.* the apocryphal *Tobias*, etc.] into the Catholic Church." (*CE.* iii, 271.) This vagary of the Holy Ghost in certifying the ill-translated and tampered Septuagint for the foundations of Christian Faith, was very disastrous, as *CE.* points out: "The Church had adopted the Septuagint as its own; this *differed from the Hebrew* not only by *the addition of several books and passages* but also *by innumerable variations of text*, due partly to the ordinary process of *corruption* in the transcription of ancient books, partly to the *culpable temerity*, as Origen called it, *of correctors* who used not a

ittle freedom in *making 'corrections,' additions, and suppressions,* ›artly to *mistakes in translation,* and finally in great part to the act that the original Septuagint had been made from a Hebrew text uite different from that fixed at Jamnia as the one standard by the ewish Rabbis." (*CE.* vii, 316.) So Yahveh only knows what he actu-lly said and did in the 4004 years up to the time his Son came to try o "redeem" his people from some of the tangles of his Holy Law.

Matters grew worse as time progressed: the ex-Pagan Greek Fa-ıers who founded Christianity, propagated the new Faith for several enturies only from the tortuous texts of this falsified Septuagint, hich was the only Old Testament "Scriptures" known to and used by ıem as the source of the "prophecies fulfilled by Jesus Christ" and the oly mysteries of the Jewish-Christian Faith. "Copies of the Septua-int," says *CE.*, "were multiplied, and, *as might be expected, many hanges, deliberate* as well as involuntary, crept in." (*CE.* xiii, 723.) ıdeed, the itch for Scripture-scribbling was so rife among such ex-agan Christians as could write and get hold of a copy, that St. ugustine complains: "It is possible to enumerate those who have anslated the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek, but not those who ave translated them into Latin. In sooth, in the early days of the ith whoso possessed a Greek manuscript and thought he had some ıowledge of both tongues was daring enough to undertake a transla-on." (*De Doct. Christ.* II, xi; *CE.* ix, 20.) So the Faith was founded ı befuddlement of the Blessed Word of God as any nondescript scrib-er palmed it off to be.

We shall more than abundantly see that Holy Church never pos-ssed or used a single book of "Scripture" or other document of im-›rtance, to the glory of God and the glorification of the Church, hich was not a rank original forgery and bristled besides with "many liberate changes" or forged interpolations.

HE SEPTUAGINT AND THE "VIRGIN-BIRTH" FRAUD

The most colossal of the blunders of the Septuagint translators, pplemented by the most insidious, persistent and purposeful falsi-ation of text, is instanced in the false translation of the notoriously lse pretended "prophecy" of Isaiah vii, 14,—frauds which have had

the most disastrous and fatal consequences for Christianity, and to humanity under its blight; the present exposure of which should instanter destroy the false Faith built on these frauds.

The Greek priest who forged the "Gospel according to St. Matthew," having before him the false Septuagint translation of Isaiah, fables the Jewish Mary yielding to the embraces of the Angel Gabriel to engender Jesus, and backs it up by appeal to the Septuagint translation of Isaiah vii, 14:

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel." (Matt. i, 23.)

Isaiah's original Hebrew, with the mistranslated words underscored, reads: "Hinneh *ha-almah harah* ve-yeld*eth* ben ve-kar*ath* shem-o immanuel";—which, falsely translated by the false pen of the pious translators, runs thus in the English: "Behold, *a virgin shall* conceive and bear a son, and *shall* call his name Immanuel" (Isa. vii, 14.) The Hebrew words *ha-almah* mean simply *the young woman;* and *harah* is the Hebrew past or perfect tense, "*conceived,*" which in Hebrew, as in English, represents *past and completed* action. Honestly translated, the verse reads: "Behold, *the young woman has conceived*—[is with child]—and bear*eth* a son and call*eth* his name Immanuel."

Almah means simply a young woman, of marriageable age, whether married or not, or a virgin or not; in a broad general sense exactly like *girl* or *maid* in English, when we say shop-girl, parlor-maid, barmaid, without reference to or vouching for her technical *virginity,* which, in Hebrew, is always expressed by the word *bethulah.* But in the Septuagint translation into Greek, the Hebrew *almah* was erroneously rendered into the Greek *parthénos, virgin,* with the definite article *ha* in Hebrew, and *e* in Greek, (the), rendered into the indefinite "*a*" by later falsifying translators. (See *Is It God's Word?* pp. 277–279; *EB.* ii, 2162; *New Commentary on the Holy Scripture,* Pt. I, p. 439.) And St. Jerome falsely used the Latin word *virgo.*

"As early as the second century B. C.," says the distinguished Hebrew scholar and critic, Salomon Reinach, "the *Jews perceived the error and pointed it out to the Greeks;* but the *Church knowingly per-*

sisted in the false reading, and for over fifteen centuries she has clung to her error." (*Orpheus,* p, 197.) The truth of this accusation of conscious persistence in known error through the centuries is proved by the confused confession of St. Jerome, who made the celebrated Vulgate translation from the Hebrew into Latin, and intentionally "clung to the error," though Jerome well knew that it was an error and false; and thus he perpetuated through fifteen hundred years the myth of the "prophetic virgin birth" of Jesus called the Christ.

Being criticized by many for this falsification, St. Jerome thus replies to one of his critics, Juvianus: "I know that the Jews are accustomed to meet us with the objection that in Hebrew the word *Almah* does not mean a *virgin,* but a *young woman.* And, to speak truth, a virgin is properly called *Bethulah,* but a young woman, or a girl, is not *Almah,* but *Naarah"!* (Jerome, *Adv. Juvianum,* I, 32; *N&PNF.* vi, 370.) So insistent was the criticism, that he was driven to write a book on the subject, in which he makes a very notable confession of the inherent incredibility of the Holy Ghost paternity-story: "For who at that time *would have believed the Virgin's word* that she had conceived of the Holy Ghost, and that the angel Gabriel had come and announced the purpose of God? and would not *all* have given their opinion against her *as an adulteress,* like Susanna? For at the present day, *now that the whole world has embraced the faith,* the Jews argue that when Isaiah says, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,' the Hebrew word denotes a young woman, *not a virgin,* that is to say, the word is ALMAH, not BETHULAH"! (Jerome, *The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary, N&PNF.* vi, 336.)

So the Greek Father or priest who forged the false "virgin-birth" interpolation into the manuscript of "Matthew," drags in maybe ignorantly the false Septuagint translation of Isaiah vii, 14, which the Latin Father St. Jerome purposely perpetuated as a pious "lie to the glory of God." The Catholic and King James Versions purposely retain this false translation; the Revised Version keeps it in, but with a gesture of honesty, which is itself a fraud, sticks into the margin in fine type, after the words "a virgin" and "shall conceive," the words, "Or, *the maiden is with child and beareth,*"—which not one in thousands would ever see or understand the significance of. So it is not some indefinite "a virgin" who 750 years in the future "shall conceive"

and "shall bear" a son whose name she "shall call" Immanuel, or Jesus; but it was some known and definite young female, married or unmarried—but *not* a "virgin"—who had already conceived and was already pregnant, and who bear*eth* a son and call*eth* his name Immanuel, . . . who should be the "sign" which "my lord" should give to Ahaz of the truth of Isaiah's false prophecy regarding the pending war with Israel and Syria, as related in Isaiah vii, and of which the total falsity is proven in 2 Chronicles xxviii, as all may read.

Although Papal Infallibility has declared that "it will never be lawful to grant . . . that the sacred writers *could have made a mistake*" (Leo XIII, Encyc. *Provid. Deus; CE.* ii, 543), yet, the fraud being notorious and exposed to the scorn of the world, and being driven by force of modern criticism, *CE.* definitely and positively—though with the usual clerical soft-soaping, confesses this age-long clerical fraud and falsification of Holy Writ, and relegates it to the junk-heap of discredited—but not discarded—dogmatic myth:

"Modern theology does not grant that Isaiah vii, 14, contains *a real prophecy fulfilled* in the virgin birth of Christ; it *must maintain,* therefore, that St. Matthew *misunderstood* the passage when he said: 'Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying, Behold, *a virgin shall be* with child, and bring forth a son, etc."! (*CE.* xv, 451.)

Thus is apparent, and confessed, the dishonesty of "Matthew" and of the Church of Christ in perverting this idle, false and falsified text of Isaiah into a "prophecy of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ," and in persisting in retaining this falsity in their dishonest Bibles as the basis of their own bogus theology unto this day of the Twentieth Century. The Church, full knowing its falsity, yet clings to this precious lie of Virgin Birth and all the concatenated consequences. Thus it declares its own condemnation as false. Some other viciously false translations of sacred Scripture will be duly noticed in their place.

As Thomas Jefferson prophetically wrote,—as is being verified:

"The day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus by the Supreme Being as his father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter"!

OTHER HEBREW SACRED FORGERIES

The marvels of the canonical apocrypha of the Hebrew sacred Books, or of the whole 94 miraculously "restored" by Ezra, could not slake the thirst of the Jewish intellect for such edifying histories, and their priests were very industrious in supplying the demands of piety and marvel-craving. Making use, as above admitted, of the most "venerable Old Testament names," they forged a voluminous literature of fanciful and fantastic fairy-tales in the guise of sacred history, revelations, oracles or predictions, all solemnly "set forth as though actually received, and written or spoken by ancient worthies, as Enoch, Moses, etc., which were widely accepted as genuine, and found a warm reception in Jewish and early Christian circles." Scarcely is there a Biblical notable of Israel in whose name these pious false writings were not forged, including Adam and Eve, and most of the ante- and post-Diluvian Patriarchs. It is impossible here to much more than mention the names of some of the principal ones of these extra-canonical apocrypha and forgeries of the Jews, as listed in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, most of them worked over with surcharge of added Christian forgeries, to adapt them to their pious propaganda.

The names of these "intriguing" volumes of forgotten lore, listed somewhat after the order of their distinguished pretended authors and times, are: Life of Adam and Eve; Testament of Adam; The Book of Creation; the Books of Seth (son of Adam); Book of Enoch (grandson of Adam); Secrets of Enoch; Parables of Enoch; Book of Lamech; Book of Noah; Book of Zoroaster (identified with Ham, son of Noah); Apocalypse of Noah; Apocalypse of Abraham; Testament of Abraham; Testament of Isaac; Testament of Jacob; The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; Testament of the Three Patriarchs; Testament of Naphthali; The Prayer of Menasseh; The Prayer of Joseph; The Story of Asenath (wife of Joseph); Prayer of Asenath; The Marriage of Asenath; The Assumption of Moses; The Testament of Moses; Book of Jannes and Mambres (the Egyptian magicians with whom Moses contended); Penitence of Jannes and Mambres; The Magical Books of Moses; The Book of Jubilees, or

Little Genesis; Book of Og the Giant; Treatise of the Giants; Josippon; Book of Jasher; The Liber Antiquitatem Bibliarum, ascribed to Philo; The Chronicles of Jerameel; Testament of Job; Psalm CLI of David, "when he fought with Goliath"; Testament of Solomon; The Contradictio Salomonis (a contest in wisdom between Solomon and Hiram); The Psalms of Solomon; Apocalypse of Elijah; Apocalypse of Baruch; The Rest of the Words of Baruch; History of Daniel; Apocalypse of Daniel; Visions of Daniel; Additions to Daniel, *viz.*: The History of Susanna (Chap. 13), the Song of the Three Children, Story of Bel and the Dragon (Chap. 14); Tobit; Judith; Additions to Esther; The Martyrdom of Isaiah; The Ascension of Isaiah; III and IV Esdras; Apocalypse of Esdras; Story of the Three Pagans, in I Esdras; I, II, III, and IV Maccabees; The Prophecy of Eldad and Medad; Apocalypse of Zephaniah; Stories of Artaphanus; Eupolemus; Story of Aphikia, wife of Jesus Sirach; The Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates; The Sibylline Oracles.

Quite half of the above Jewish false-writings, separately listed under the grouping of "Jewish with Christian Accretions," the *Catholic Encyclopedia* describes with comments such as "recast or freely interpolated by Christians," "many Christian interpolations," etc., "presenting in their ensemble a fairly full Christology" (*CE.* i, 606). If the pious Christians, confessedly, committed so many and so extensive forgeries and frauds to adapt these popular Jewish fairy-tales of their God and holy Worthies to the new Christian Jesus and his Apostles, we need feel no surprise when we discover these same Christians forging outright new wonder-tales of their Christ under the fiction of the most noted Christian names and in the guise of inspired Gospels, Epistles, Acts and Apocalypses.

THE "INSPIRED" HEBREW SCRIPTURES

The processes of the formation of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures are, however, interesting and intriguing, if sacred tradition is true. According to priestly lore, the man Moses, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (another Christian assurance; Acts vii, 22), sat down in the Wilderness of Sinai and under divine inspiration wrote his Five Books of prehistorical history, codes of post-exilic

divine Law, and chronicles of contemporary and future notable events, including four different names of his father-in-law—(*viz.:* Jethro, Ex. iii, 1; Reuel, Ex. ii, 18; Jether, Ex. iv, 18, and Raguel, Num. x, 29, while a fifth name, Hobab, is awarded him in Judges iv, 11), together with a graphic account of his own death and burial, and of the whole month afterwards spent by all Israel mourning his death. He also records the death of his brother Aaron at Mt. Hor (Num. xx, 28; xxxiii, 38), just six months before his own death; though, in amazing contradiction, he elsewhere records Aaron as having died at Mosera, just after leaving Sinai (Deut. x, 6), thirty-nine years previously,—and thus nullifies the entire history of the wonderful career and deeds of Aaron as high priest during the whole 40 years of wandering in the Wilderness, of which the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are largely filled; as also many other matters and things occurring for some centuries after his death, and known as "post-Mosaica" to the scholars.

Joshua, the successor of Moses, next wrote the history of his life and times, working in, too, a sketch of his own death and funeral obsequies (Josh. xxiv, 29–30), and quoting the celebrated miracle of the sun standing still, of which he says, "Is it not written in the Book of Jasher?"—which Book of Jasher was not itself written until several hundred years later, at least in or after the time of David; for it is recorded: "And he [David] bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow; behold, it is written in the Book of Jasher." (2 Sam. i, 18.)

The Book of Judges was written by nobody knows whom, nor when, except that it was long "post-exilic." It relates that, "Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it" (Jud. i, 18); whereas it was not until David had reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, that "the King and his men went to Jerusalem" and failed to capture it, "nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, and called it the City of David." (2 Sam. v, 5–9.) It is further recorded in Judges that the tribe of Dan made a silver idol of the Hebrew God and hired a grandson of Moses to serve it, and "he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the captivity of the land" (Jud. xviii, 30)—about a thousand years later.

The gifted Samuel, Prophet of the heathen High Places of Baal-

worship, gives his name and inspiration to two books of mythical history written piecemeal until the "return from captivity," as above indicated, and early in his work he records the historic episode of the calling up of his own ghost from the dead by the famous Witch of En-dor. (1 Sam. xviii, 1, 7–19.)

The ex-bandit David, "man after God's own heart"—after murdering a man to get his adulterous wife, and engendering of her his all-wise son and hero, Solomon, wrote the 150 songs of the Hebrew Hymn Book, many of his psalms singing of the long posthumous Babylonian Captivity.

Solomon himself, who was son-in-law to nearly everybody in the heathen nations round about who had eligible daughters, wrote the wisdom of the ages into his Book of Proverbs, though not one of them is by Solomon, and in his lighter (headed or hearted) spells penned his erotic Canticles, which for realistic lubricity quite outdo Boccaccio, and would be really unmailable under the Postal Laws if they weren't in the Holy Bible and clerically captioned "The Church's Love unto Christ." These are indeed but one collection out of the great many pornographic stories of The Holy Ghost's *Decameron*, enshrined in God's Holy Word for delectation of the Puritans of Faith.

Other divinely inspired and anonymous writers, falsely entitling their effusions under the names of this or that Prophet or other wholly fictitious personage, as Job, Esther, Ruth, Daniel, gave forth yet other inspired histories, books of oracles or prophecies, apocalypses or high powered visions into Futurity, and a miscellany of sacred novels, love-stories and nondescript musings or ravings known collectively as the hagiographa or holy writings of the Jews. All these together, now thirty-nine in number, comprise the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. It being out of question to review each of these here, it may be stated with assurance that not one of them bears the name of its true author; that every one of them is a composite work of many hands "interpolating" the most anachronistic and contradictory matters into the original writings, and often reciting as accomplished facts things which occurred many centuries after the time of the supposed writer, as Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, and the so-called "historical" books. For scientific detailed demonstration of this the *Encyclopedia Biblica* digests the most competent authorities; my own *Is It God's Word?*

makes the proofs from the sacred texts themselves. See the recent "Religious Book of the Month Club's" notable *Unraveling the Book of Books*, by Trattner. (1929.)

But as the Christian religion depends more vitally on Genesis and Moses than on all the other sacred writings and writers, we may appeal to the admissions of *CE.*, thereto driven by force of modern criticism, for the destruction and abandonment of the Moses Mythus:

> "It is true that the Pentateuch, so long attributed to Moses, is now held by the vast majority of non-Catholic, and by an increasing number of Catholic, scholars to be a compilation of four independent sources put together in final shape soon after the Captivity." (*CE.* i, 622.)

This scores strongly for Hebrew-Christian forgery and fraud in attributing this primitive system of Bible "science" and barbarous law to a god as a pretext for priestly domination of the superstitious people. That God-given forged law thus prescribes for priestcraft: "The man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest, . . . even that man shall die." (Deut. xvii, 12.) The whole Five Books of Moses are thus a confessed forgery in the names of Moses and of God; every one of the *Thus saith the Lord* a thousand times repeated, with speeches and laws put into the mouth of the God, are false and forged. Speaking of the "difficulty, in the present condition of Old Testament criticism, of recognizing more than a small portion of the Pentateuch as documentary evidence contemporary with Moses,"—who, if he ever lived, which may be confidently denied, —never wrote a line of it, *CE.* further confesses to the natural evolution—*not* the "divine revelation"—of the Hebrew mythology into a (no less mythological) monotheistic religion: "The Hegelian principle of evolution . . . applied to religion, has powerfully helped to beget a tendency to regard the religion of Israel as *evolved* by processes not transcending nature, from a polytheistic worship of the elements to a spiritual and ethical monotheism." (*CE.* i, 493.) But this finally and very late evolved monotheism is neither a tardy divine revelation to the Jews, nor a novel invention by them; it was a thousand years antedated by Amenhotep IV and Tut-ankh-amen in Egypt,—nor were even they the pioneers. We have seen the admission that the Zoroastrian Mithra religion was "a divinely revealed Monotheism" (*CE.* ii, 156).

But the Hebrews were confessed and notorious idolaters and polytheists until after the Captivity; that fact is a thousand times alleged throughout the Scriptures as the sole reason for their troubles and captivity. As above suggested, and as thoroughly demonstrated by the texts in my other book, the Hebrew God Yahveh was but one of the many gods worshipped by the Hebrews; and Yahveh never claimed more than to be a "God above all gods," to be preferred before them all;—as at Sinai he enacted: "Thou shalt have no other gods *before* [in preference to] me,"—thus omitting the other gods.

FORGERY BY CONTRADICTIONS

Contradictions throughout the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, abound by the many thousands, and in virtually every book of both Testaments,—as every one knows who has read the Bible even casually. See some thousand and more of the most notorious and vital ones are cited in "deadly parallel" in my *Is It God's Word?* as one of the most conclusive proofs of uninspired human origin and of confusion worse confounded of tinkering, "interpolation" and forgery outright, by the pious priests of Israel and Judah, and the Ezra "school" of forgers of the "Law and the Prophets."

OUR "PHONY" CHRISTIAN ERA

"It was a monk of the 6th century, named Dionysius Exiguus (Dennis the Little), who fixed our present Christian era, laying down that Jesus Christ was born on the 25th of December, A. U. C. 753, and commencing the new era from the following year, 754. That date, as we shall see, *cannot be correct* and, instead of being an improvement on, is farther from the truth than the dates assigned by the early Fathers, St. Irenæus and Tertullian, who fixed the date of the Nativity in the 41st year of Augustus, that is to say, 3 years B. C., or A. U. C. 751 . . . All this points to the fact that Herod died in the year 4 B. C., and that our Saviour must have been born before that date . . . Our Saviour was born some time before Herod's death, probably two years or more. So that, if Herod died in the year 4 B. C., we should be taken to 6 or 7 B. C. as the year of the Nativity" (*CE.* 735–6).

This, of course, discredits the date given by the inspiration of

Luke, and demonstrates that both he and Matthew merely alleged fictitious dates for what in all human probability was a purely fictitious event. The new Era of Christ was, however, very slow in gaining recognition; the first official secular document dating by it was a charter of Charlemagne, after 800 A. D., and it did not come into general use until about 1000 A. D. I may mention a fiery sermon I once heard, in which the expounder of truth vindicated the glory of God by declaiming that every Jew and Infidel confessed to Jesus Christ every time he dated a letter or mentioned the year of an event. Being simply a hearer of the Word, I could not rise to suggest, that by the same token we confess more to the Pagan gods than to the Christian,—for more than half the months and every day of the week are named for Pagan deities, and we name them much more often than we do the years of grace and salvation of Christ. After this bad start from Gospel error and contradiction, we now turn to further evidences of "Gospel truth" in contradictions and forgery.

Among the most signal of these incessant contradictions and scientific impossibilities of Divine Inspiration, are those relating to the capital matter,—for the credit of the Christian Religion, of the time and manner of Creation of earth and Man, based on Holy Writ and on the "chronology" worked out, with several hundred disparate results, from the inspired pedigrees of the ante-Diluvian Patriarchs. So fatally important is this to Christianity, that the True Church—"which never deceived anyone" and "has never erred,"—speaking through *CE.*, thus admits that Christianity stands or falls with— "the *literal, historical sense of the first three chapters of Genesis* in as far as they bear on *the facts touching the foundations of the Christian religion, e. g.*, the creation of all things by God at the beginning of time, the special creation of man, the formation of the first woman from the first man, the unity of the human race"! (*Papal Biblical Commission*, June 30, 1909; *CE.* vii, 313). Thus: No Adam and Eve, no Garden of Eden and Talking Snake, no "Fall" and Curse—therefore: No Saviour Jesus Christ, no Plan of Salvation, no truth in the Christian Religion! The fatal point is elucidated with inexorable logic and dogmatic truth by the "Reformed" ex-Father Peter Martyr: "So important is it to comprehend the *work of creation* that we see the creed of the Church take this as its starting point. Were this Article taken away, there

would be no original sin; the promise of Christ would become void, and all the vital force of our religion would be destroyed"! Father Luther inherited the same faith and bequeathed it to his dissident following: "Moses spoke properly and plainly, and neither allegorically nor figuratively; and therefore the world with all creatures was created in six days." Calvin, in his "Commentary on Genesis," argues that the Genesis account of Creation is literally true, and warns those who dare to believe otherwise, and thus "basely insult the Creator, to expect a Judge who will annihilate them." Again he says: "We know on the authority of Moses, that longer ago than 6000 years the world did not exist." So too, the Westminster Confession of Faith, in full Protestant force and effect today—specially lays it down as "necessary to salvation to believe that all things visible and invisible were created not only out of nothing but exactly in six days." And the Churches have murdered countless thousands to impress this beautiful impossible truth.

Notwithstanding the crushing disproofs of those primitive forged "Fables of Moses," by every fact of astronomy, geology, anthropology, biology, and kindred sciences, known to schoolboys today, Faith clings fatuously to its fetiches: Arkansas ("Now laugh!"), Mississippi, Tennessee, three States of the Twentieth Century United States, have made it crime by Law to teach the sciences which discredit the Genesis Myths, upon which Christian Superstition utterly depends; and like medieval laws are sought to be imposed in all our States. The True Church, like all the others, still founds its "Faith and Morals" upon these old Hebrew forgeries of Genesis and peddles them to its Faithful; but it knows better. Thus the whole True Faith is shipwrecked by these heretical confessions of *CE.*, forced from it by the truths of heretical Modernism, in full face of the fierce inspired fulminations of the Syllabus of Errors: "In an article on Bible chronology it is hardly necessary in these days to discuss the date of the Creation. At least two hundred dates have been suggested, varying from 3483 to 6934 years B. C., all based on the supposition that the Bible enables us to settle the point. But it does nothing of the kind. . . . The literal interpretation has now been entirely abandoned; and the world is admitted to be of immense antiquity"! (*CE.* iii, 731.) Again the "sacred science" of Genesis and of Christianity is further

admitted to be false, and the fabulous "Septuagint" Bible on which Christianity was founded before the era of the second century forgeries of Gospels and Epistles, to be a holy fraud, in these further excerpts accrediting the true revelations of modern Science as against those of Moses:

"The church . . . does not attach decisive influence to the chronology of the Vulgate, the official version of the Western Church, since in the Martyrology for Christmas day, the creation of Adam is put down in the year 5199 B. C., which is the reading of the Septuagint. It is, however, certain that we cannot confine the years of man's sojourn on earth to that usually set down. . . . Various explanations have been given of chapter v (Genesis) to explain the short time it seems to allow between the Creation and the Flood. . . . The total number of years in the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint differs, in the Hebrew it being 1656, in the Samaritan 1307, and in the Septuagint 2242. . . . According to Science the length of this period was much greater than appears from the genealogical table. . . . In any case, whether we follow the traditional or critical view, the numbers obtained from the genealogy of the Patriarchs in chapter xi must be greatly augmented, in order to allow time for such a development of civilization, language, and race type as had been reached by the time of Abraham." (*CE.* iii, 731–3.)

FORGERY BY FALSE TRANSLATIONS

We have noted the capital forgery wrought by the Church in consciously and unconscionably adopting and perpetuating the false translation in the Septuagint, of the "*virgin shall conceive*" pretended prophecy of Isaiah vii, 14. Indisputably the whole forged fabric of supernatural Christianity is based on, and depends upon, this one monumental forgery falsely used to give credit to the Christian forgery of "the Gospel according to Matthew" as to the Divine and miraculous "Virgin birth of Jesus Christ." Out of scores of other notoriously falsified translations of the sacred Old Testament texts, attention is here called only to several of the most signal ones which vitally affect and destroy the validity of the most essential pretensions of truth of the Christian religion. These frauds of translation and others, have been thoroughly examined and supported by nu-

merous texts from the original Hebrew, and falsified verses of the English versions, in my *Is It God's Word?*, to which references must be made for a more complete treatment than is here pertinent. Those now cited in summary are all of them deliberate falsifications and forgeries in translation which go to the vitals of the Hebrao-Christian system of holy imposture.

If the Hebrew originals had been truthfully translated, we should have no such false pretenses for faith as the Hebrew One God anciently revealed to Adam, and to Moses, no Adam, no man "but little lower than the angels" because of his immortal soul, no unique "revelation" of the "Ineffable Name" Jehovah to Moses; all that we would have,—all that the Hebrew texts reveal—is a primitive polytheistic idolatry of the crudest and most superstitious order. Let us see.

(*a*) *The "God" Forgery*

The first sentence of the translated Bibles is a falsification and forgery of the highest importance. We read with awed solemnity of faith: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i, 1). The Hebrew word for God is *el;* the plural is *elohim,* gods. The Hebrew text of Genesis i, 1, reads: "*Bereshith bara elohim,*" etc.,—"In-beginning created *gods* the-heavens and-the-earth." And, in the same chapter we read in Hebrew *honestly translated,*—thirty times the word "*elohim,*" *gods,* to whom are attributed all the works of creation in the six peculiar "days" of Genesis. This is plainly evident from the Hebrew texts of Genesis i, which even false intention could not hide in the translation, "And-said *elohim* (gods), Let-*US*-make man (*adam*) *in-image-OUR,* after-likeness-*OUR*" (i, 26). And when "adam" had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, "the *Lord God*" said, "Behold, the-man has become like one of *US,* to know good and evil" (iii, 27). And when the Tower of Babel was abuilding, "The *Lord* [Heb. Yahveh] said . . . Come, let *US* go down," etc. And thus, some 2570 times the *plural, elohim, gods,* is used in the Hebrew texts, but is always falsely translated "God" in the false singular, when speaking of the Hebrew deity, Yahveh.

In the three Genesis verses above quoted, we have three different designations of the Hebrew deity or deities: *elohim,* gods, falsely translated "God"; "Lord God" (Heb. *Yahveh-elohim*); and "Lord"

(Heb. *Yahveh*). Yahveh is the proper name of the Hebrew God, in English rendered Jehovah: *Yahveh-elohim* is a Hebrew "construct-form" honestly meaning "Yahveh-of-the-gods." Invariably (with rare exceptions to be noted), these personal names are falsely rendered "Lord" and "Lord God," respectively, for purposes of pious fraud which we shall now expose to the shame of a theology of imposture. We will return to this after noting a pair of others.

(*b*) *The "Adam" Forgery*

There was no first man "Adam," according to the Hebrew texts of the story. The word *adam* in Hebrew is a common noun, meaning *man* in a generic sense; in Genesis i, 26, we have read: "And *elohim* (gods) said, Let us make *adam* (man)"; and so "*elohim* created *ha-adam* (the-man); . . . male and female created he them" (i. 27). And in the second story, where man is first made alone: "Yahveh formed *ha-adam* (the-man) out of the dust of *ha-adamah*—the ground" (ii, 7). Man is called in Hebrew *adam* because formed out of *adamah*, the ground; just as in Latin man is called *homo* because formed from *humus*, the ground,—*homo ex humo*, in the epigram of Father Lactantius. (Lact., *Divine Institutes*, ii, 58; *ANF.* vii, 58.) The forging of the common noun *adam* into a mythical proper name Adam, was a post-exilic fraud in the forging of fictitious genealogies from "in the beginning" to Father Abraham.

(*c*) *The "Soul" Forgery*

In Genesis i is the account of the creation of *elohim*—gods—on the fifth day, of "*nephesh hayyah*—the moving creature that hath life," and of "*nephesh hayyah*—every living creature"—out of the *waters* (i, 20, 21); and on the sixth day of "*nephesh hayyah*—the living creature" out of the *ground* (i, 24); and he gave to *ha-adam—the-man* dominion over "kol *nephesh hayyah*—everything wherein there is life." (i, 30.) So reads the Hebrew text—all these dumb animal living creatures are by God called "*nephesh hayyah*,"—literally "living soul," as will be found stuck into the margins of the Authorized Version. In chapter ii we have the history of *ha-adam* made from *ha-adamah;* and, in wonderful contrast to these lowly "living creatures"

(*nephesh hayyah*), Yahveh-elohim "breathed into his nostrils *nishmath hayyim*—(living breaths), and *ha-adam* became *nephesh hayyah*—a living soul"! (ii, 7.) In Hebrew *nephesh* everywhere and simply means *soul*, and *hayyah* (living) is the feminine singular adjective from *hai*, life. Man, therefore, was created exactly the same as the other animals; all had or were *nephesh hayyah*—living souls, indistinctly. The "false pen of the scribes," who in translation made the dumb animals merely *living creatures*, and "Creation's microcosmical masterpiece, Man," a "living soul," falsely altered these plain words so as to deceive into a belief of a special God-breathed soul in man, far different from the brute animal that perisheth.

(*d*) *The "Mosaic Revelation" Forgery*

When Yahveh appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush, and announced himself as "the God of thy fathers," he was a total stranger to Moses; Moses did not at all know him, had never heard of him; so that he asked, "What is thy name?"—so that he could report it to the people back home in Egypt, who had never heard it. After some intermission, the God came directly to the point, and declared—I quote the exact words—one of the most notorious falsities in Holy Writ:

"And *elohim* spake unto Moses, and said unto him, *anoki Yahveh*—I am the *Lord!*

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of el-shaddai, but by my name Yahveh (JEHOVAH) *was I not known to them.*" (Ex. vi, 2, 3.)

Here we have the positive averment of the Hebrew God himself to the effect that here, for the first time since the world began, is "revealed" to mankind the "ineffable name" of Yahveh, here first appearing in the Bible translations, and there printed as JEHOVAH in capital letters for more vivid and awe-inspiring impression. But this is a capital Lie of the Lord, or of his biographer who imputed it to him. In verse 4 of Genesis ii, the *name* YAHVEH first appears; "in the day that *Yahveh-elohim* made the earth and the heavens." Its first recorded use in the mouth of a mythical personage, was when Mother Eve "conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from *Yahveh*

—the Lord." (Gen. iv, 1.) One hundred and fifty-six times the personal *name* YAHVEH occurs in the Book of Genesis alone; and scores of these times in the mouths of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, as any one may read in Genesis, with the assurance that every single time that the title "the Lord" and "the Lord God" appears, it is a false translation by the priests for the Hebrew personal name YAHVEH. Throughout the Hebrew "Scriptures" the Divine Name thousands of times occurs: "The sacred name occurs in Genesis about 156 times; . . . in round numbers it is found in the Old Testament 6000 times, either alone or in conjunction with another Divine name." (*CE.* viii, 329, 331.) More exactly, "What is called the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, appears in the Old Testament 6823 times as the *proper name* of God as the God of Israel. As such it serves *to distinguish him from the gods of the other nations.*" (*EB.* iii, 3320.) Thus was the Hebrew tribal god YAHVEH distinguished from Bel, and Chemosh, and Dagon, and Shamash, and the scores of "gods of the nations"; just as Bill distinguishes its bearer from Tom, Dick, and Harry. This was precisely the Hebrew usage—to distinguish one heathen god from another. And this the false translators sought to hide, giving names to all the "other gods," but suppressing a *name* for the Hebrew deity, who as "the Lord," or "the Lord God," was high and unique, "a god above all gods,"—the one and only true God.

But yet more malicious and evil-intentioned of deception: 6823 times is the *name* of the Hebrew God concealed by false rendition for the deliberate purpose of forging the whole Hebrew Bible, as translated, into semblance of harmony with the false avowal of Exodus vi, 3, that "by my *name* YAHVEH was I *not know* unto them." Search as one may, outside Exodus vi, 3, the god-name YAHVEH (Jehovah) is never to be found in the translations in a single instance, except in Psalm lxxxiii, 18, and Isaiah xii, 2 and xxvi, 4. The false translations thus "make truth to be a liar," the lie of Exodus vi, 3 to seem the truth; and a barbarous heathen tribal god among a hundred neighbor and competitive gods to be the nameless One Lord God of the Universe. The Hebrew-Christian One God is a patent Forgery and Myth; a mythological Father-god can have no "only begotten Son"; Jesus Christ is à mythus even before he is mythically born in the

fancies of the Church Fathers, as we shall soon have ample evidence to prove.

With respect to the mythical Hebrew-Christian God or gods, we may safely say, as says Father Justin Martyr apropos of the other mythic Pagan gods: "And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned." (*First Apology*, ch. vi; *ANF.* i, 169.)

THE ANCIENT IDEA OF "HISTORY"

We may pause a moment to catch a valuable view which will be of great aid to understanding the mental processes of the ancient writers in their portrayal of events, real or fanciful, which they set about to record as "history." These pioneers of historical literature lived in an age of simple-minded credulity, and everything which they saw recorded or heard related, however extravagant and seemingly incredible or impossible, passed all as perfectly good history in their receptive and uncritical minds. Speaking of the legendary, the traditional, the supernatural stories, myths, folk-lore and fables,—"in short, everything which seemed to testify to the past,"—which formed the raw material of the early historians, the *Encyclopedia Biblica* gives a graphic picture of primitive history-writing, not only Hebraic but Gentilic:

"Their sources, like those of the Greek logographers with whom it is natural to compare them, were poems, genealogies, often representing clan-groupings, tribal and local traditions of diverse kinds, such as furnish the materials for most of the Book of Judges; the historical traditions of sanctuaries; the sacred legends of holy places, relating theophanies and other revelations, the erection of the altar or sacred stone, the origin of popular usages—*e. g.* Bethel; laws; myths of foreign or native origin; folk-lore and fable,—in short, everything which seemed to testify of the past.

"To us the greater part of this material is not in any proper sense historical at all; but for the early Israelite as for the early Greek historian it was otherwise; our distinctions between authentic history, legendary history, pure legend, and myth, he made as little as he recognized our distinction of natural and supernatural. It was all

history to him; and if one part of it had a better attestation than another, it was certainly the sacred history as it was told at the ancient sanctuaries of the land.

"The early Hebrew historians did not affix their names to their works; they had, indeed, no idea of authorship. The traditions and legends which they collected were common property, and did not cease to be so when they were committed to writing; the written book was in every sense the property of the scribe or the possessor of the roll. Only a part of the great volume of tradition was included in the first books. Transcribers freely added new matter from the same sources on which the original authors had drawn, the traditions of their own locality or sanctuary, variants of historical traditions or legend. Every new copy was thus in some measure a fresh rescension. . . . Scribes compared different copies, and combined their contents according to their own judgment or interests. . . . Of records or monuments there are but a few traces, and these for the most part doubtful." (*EB.* ii, 2075–76.)

To say nothing now of the Old or New Testament "canonical" and "apocryphal" literature, countless examples of this imaginative method of history-writing abound in all the ancient writers, as all who are familiar with such classics as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Josephus, Livy, will readily recall. One of the most inveterate forms of imaginative creation on the part of the old historiographers was the invention of sayings and whole speeches which, just as do the fiction-writers of today, they put entire into the mouths of the personages of whom they were writing, which discourses they not only invented whole, but always wrought them in the style and manner of the writer and his epoch, and not in those of their ancient subjects. All are familiar with such instances in Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, and which we all know are pure inventions of those writers. Naming several of the ancient historians above mentioned, and others, a distinguished philosopher of history thus describes the art:

"Such speeches as we find in Thucydides (for example), of which we can positively assert that they are not *bona-fide* records. . . . Thus Livy puts into the mouths of the old Roman Kings, Consuls, and generals, such orations as would be delivered by an accomplished advocate of the Livian era. . . . In the same way he gives us descriptions of battles, as if he had

been an actual spectator; but whose features would serve well enough for battles in any period." (Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 2.)

Speaking of much later times, and of a different class, but like type, of writers, Hegel again says: "In the Middle Ages, if we except the Bishops, who were placed in the very centre of the political world, the Monks monopolized this category as naïve chroniclers." (*Ib.* p. 3.)

As typical illustration of the principles and practices above described of the best of the ancient writers, but more especially as an example of the kind of "history" written by the most learned and illustrious historian of Jewry, fellow-countryman and contemporary of the supposed Apostolic writers of the New Testament books, it is of the highest significance to cite some of the solemn historical recordations of Josephus, from two of his most famous works; they will make more appreciated at their real value some of the inspired historical recitals of contemporaneous sacred history.

In his *Antiquities of the Jews* Josephus follows closely the subject matter and order of narration of the early Old Testament books, beginning with the Creation, giving the full substance of those histories, and adding quaint comments all his own and expansions and embellishments unknown to or unrecorded by Moses. In Eden, not only the Talking Snake could speak, but all the now dumb animals: "All living creatures had one language, at that time" (I, i, 4). After our parents had eaten of the Fruit of Knowledge and, discovering themselves naked, hid themselves from the Creator, "This behaviour surprised God," who delivers a lengthy speech of reproval not recorded by Moses (*Ib.*); and such orations are plentiful and detailed between God and all the other notables who came into personal contact with him; a gem is his oration to Noah. He relates the wars waged by the wicked posterity of Cain, to the great distress of Adam, who predicted the two-fold destruction of the earth, once by water and again by fire. As the Sethites were good people and intelligent, and had made great discoveries in astronomy, which they wished preserved for such posterity as might survive the yet future Flood, "they made two pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone; they inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar of brick should be destroyed by the

Flood, the pillar of stone might remain, and exhibit these discoveries to mankind; and also inform them that there was another pillar of brick erected by them. Now this remains in the land of Siriad to this day." (*Ib.*, I, ii, 2.) He relates with naïve and realistic garnishment the tale of Sodom, and Lot and his daughters, and of Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt, which is Gospel truth, "for I have seen it, and it remains at this day"! (*Ib.* I, xi, 4.) These historical drolleries might be quoted *ad infinitum* from Jewry's greatest historian.

The name of Solomon was most potent conjure in the Orient through all the succeeding centuries; the spells and charms, amulets and fetiches inscribed with his mystic symbol and pronounced in his name, were the terror of all the devils who so populated the Jewish mind, and the Christian. A noted instance of the potency of this Name, exhibited before the Roman Emperor Vespasian and his court and army, and witnessed by Josephus himself, so circumstantial, so faith-compelling, so artless and childishly fabling, that I am constrained to quote it for the light it sheds on the "historical" methods of the "age of apocryphal literature":

"God also enabled him [Solomon] to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, relieving people that were demoniacs in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring, that had a root of one of the sorts mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantation which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly; for which reason it is, that all men may know the vastness of Solomon's abilities, and how he was beloved of God, and that the extraordinary virtues of every kind with which this king was endowed, may not be unknown

to any people under the sun; for this reason, I say, it is that we have proceeded to speak so largely of these matters." (Josephus, *Antiq. Jews,* Bk. VIII, Ch. ii, 5; Whitson's trans.)

This is followed by the full text of the autograph letters between Solomon and Hiram regarding the building of the Temple.

Whether the same kind of root of Solomon's magical powers just above used by Eleazar, or one of another species of like power, it was very difficult to obtain and the quest was attended with many dangers, which of course enhanced the value and potency of its magic; but here is Josephus's solemn description of the plant and account of the eerie and risky manner of securing this treasure, known locally as Baaras root:

"Its colour is like that of flame, and toward evening it sends out a certain ray like lightning: it is not easily taken by such as would do it, but recedes from their hands, nor will yield itself to be taken quietly, until either the urine of a woman, or blood, be poured upon it; nay, even then it is certain death to those that touch it, unless anyone take and hang the root itself down from his hand, and so carry it away. It may also be taken another way, without danger, which is this: they dig a trench quite round about it, till the hidden part of the root be very small, then they tie a dog to it, and, when the dog tries hard to follow him that tied him, this root is easily plucked up, but the dog dies immediately, as if it were instead of the man that would take the plant away; nor after this need anyone be afraid of taking it into their hands. Yet, after all this pains in getting, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into any men that are alive and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews,* Book VII, Chap. iv, 3.)

Instead of artful mendacity, some readers, in view of this, may charitably impute artless simplicity of wit to some of the devil-exorcising fable-mongers of the New Testament, the pious Fathers who forged its Books.

If such examples are abounding in the most brilliant of Jewish historians, distinguished for nobility of lineage, for statesmanship and for literary ability, what may be expected from the admittedly "ignorant and unlearned men" such as traditionally wrote those Gospels and Epistles of the Christians? We may now appreciate the

full significance of the admission of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, speaking of the Church Fathers and writers through all the Ages of Faith "before the eighteenth century," of whom it says:

"The early ecclesiastical writers were unconscious of nearly all the problems to which criticism has given rise. . . . Looking at the Divine side, they deemed as of trifling account questions of authorship, date, composition, accepting unreservedly for these points such traditions as the Jewish Church had handed down. . . . The Fathers saw in every sentence of the Scripture a pregnant oracle of God. Apparent contradictions and other difficulties were solved without taking possible human imperfections into view. Except in regard to the preservation of the sacred text there was nothing to elicit a critical view of the Bible in the age of the Fathers, and this applies also to the Scholastic period." (*CE.* iv, 492.)

CHRISTIAN "REVELATIONS" IN JEWISH FORGERIES

Christians no doubt believe in simple faith that the wonderful inspired truths of their New Testament were original pronouncements of Jesus Christ or directly revealed by him to his holy Apostles, who in turn revealed them to the populace for the first time as the "good news" of the new religion for the salvation of sinful man. Even a brief glance at a few of the most notable of the Jewish forgeries of the "age of apochryphal literature" will dispel that pious belief, and show the most characteristic and essential doctrines and dogmas of Christianity to be but refurbished vagaries of the fanciful and fabulous speculations of already existing Jewish apocryphal writings of the times just preceding and within the new Christian era. These writings were put forth falsely as the utterances of long since dead or wholly legendary Old Testament notables, and were neither inspired nor revealed heavenly truth, but simply vain and forged speculations of their fantastic writers. We shall see the cardinal tenets of "revealed" Christianity in a glance at a few of these Jewish pseudographs, and let the Christian apologist explain.

"This literature is of the highest value today because of the light it throws on the growth of eschatological and Messianic doctrines among the Jewish people just previous to the rise of Christianity, especially since these doctrines have, in a purified form, found a permanent place in the Christian system." (*New Int. Encyc.* i, 745.)

The Book of Enoch, forged in the name of the grandson of Adam, is the fragmentary remains of a whole literature which circulated under the pretended authorship of that mythical Patriarch. In its present form, the work, of 104 chapters, is composed of five Books, with the following titles, of which those of Books 3 and 4 are of particular significance, namely: 1. The Rape of Women by Fallen Angels, and the Giants that were Begotten of Them; 2. The Visions of Enoch begun; 3. The Visions continued, with Views of the Messiah's Kingdom; 4. Man's Destiny revealed in Dreams from the Beginning to the End of the Messianic Kingdom; 5. The Warnings of Enoch to his own Family and to Mankind. This work is a composite of at least five unknown Jewish writers, and was composed during the last two centuries B. C. The forged Book of Enoch is quoted as genuine and inspired in the Christian Epistle of Jude (14, *et seq.*), and as "Scripture" in the near-canonical Epistle of Barnabas; with the early Church Fathers and Apologists, among whom Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Anatolius, Origen, St. Augustine, etc., "it had all the weight of a canonical book," but was finally condemned as a forgery by the forged Apostolic Constitutions,—an instance of the very dubious divine guidance of the inspired Church against all error. Father Tertullian devotes an entire chapter "Concerning the Genuineness of the Prophecy of Enoch," in which he gives fantastic patristic reasons as to how the Book survived Noah's Flood, either by the providence of Noah himself or by the Providence of God as in the mythical case of Esdras. In answer to the scoffing objections that the Jews rejected the Book, "I suppose," he seriously argues, "that they do not think that, having been *published before the Deluge*, it could have safely survived that world-wide calamity, the abolisher of all things." But, he urges, "let them recall to their memory that Noah, the survivor of the deluge, was the great-grand-son of Enoch himself," and that Noah probably preserved it at the behest of Methuselah. But, again, "If Noah had not preserved it in this way, there would still be this consideration to warrant our assertion of the genuineness of this Scripture: he could equally have *renewed* it, under the Spirit's inspiration, after it had been destroyed by the violence of the Deluge, as, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian storming of it, every document of the Jewish literature is generally

agreed to have been restored through Ezra." But the good Father had other and equally cogent clerical reasons for accepting the Book as inspired Scripture: "But since Enoch in the same Scripture has preached likewise concerning the Lord, nothing at all must be rejected *by* us which pertains *to* us; and we read that 'every Scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired.' . . . To these considerations is added the fact that Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude." (*On the Apparel of Women*, II, ii; *ANF.* iv, 15–16.) By this excerpt from the pious Father may be judged the value of the "testimony" of Apostles and Church Fathers as to the inspiration, truth and authenticity of holy "Scriptures,"—which is *nil.*

Of the immense significance of these forged Jewish "sacred writings" in general upon Christian "revelation," and of the fabulous *Book of Enoch* in particular, with its elaborated myth of the Messiah, *CE.* thus confesses: "Jewish Apocalyptic is an attempt to supply the place of prophecy, which had been dead for centuries, and has its roots in the sacred oracles of Israel. . . . Naturally basing itself upon the Pentateuch and the Prophets, it clothed itself *fictitiously* with the authority of a patriarch or prophet who was *made to reveal* the transcendent future. . . . Messianism *of course* plays an important part in apocalyptic eschatology, and the *idea* of the Messias in certain books received a *very high development.* . . . The parables of Henoch, with *their pre-existent Messias*, mark the highest point of *development*—(hence *not* Divine Revelation)—of the Messianic *concept* to be found in the whole range of Hebrew literature." (*CE.* i, 601, 602.) From these uninspired ravings of Jewish forgers came thus the "divine revelation" of the co-eternal "Son of God" worked up instead of the old "revealed" *human* King "of the seed of David."

The forged Book of Enoch, thus vouched for, is notable for being "the earliest appearance of the *Messiah* in non-canonical literature." It is of the greatest importance for its doctrine of the Jewish Messiah, who here appears as wholly an earthly human deliverer and King over Israel forever, and for the origin of the exalted titles applied to the Messiah in the New Testament Books, as well as of a number of supposedly distinctive Christian doctrines, first "revealed" by Jesus the Christ. In this Book we first find the lofty titles: "Christ" or "the Anointed One," "Son of Man," "the Righteous One," "the Elect One,"

—all of which were boldly plagiarized by the later Christians and bestowed on Jesus of Nazareth. The Messiah, just as in the New Testament of later times, exists from the beginning (48, 2); he sits on the throne of God (45, 3); and all judgment is committed unto him (69, 27). The acceptance of Enoch as a Messianic prophet by the Christians led to his rejection by the Jews. Here is the earliest invention of the Christian Hell of fire and brimstone for eternal torture: "The wicked shall go down into the Sheol of darkness and fire and dwell there forever"; this being "one of the earliest mentions of Sheol as a hell of torment" (*CE.* i, 602–3; *EB.* i, 223–5). It is the oldest piece of Jewish literature which teaches the general resurrection of Israel, a doctrine expanded to include Gentiles in later "interpolations" into New Testament books. It abounds in such "Christian" doctrines as the Messianic Kingdom, Hell, the Resurrection, and Demonology, the Seven Heavens, and the Millennium, all of which have here their apocryphal Jewish promulgation, after being plagiarized bodily from the Persian and Babylonian myths and superstitions, as we have seen confessed. There are numerous quotations, phrases, clauses, or thoughts derived from Enoch, or of closest kin with it, in several of the New Testament Gospels and Epistles, which may be readily found and compared as catalogued in the authorities below cited;—Pagan-Jewish myths and doctrines which shared in moulding the analogous New Testament "revelations" or formed the necessary link in the development of doctrines from the Old to the New Testament. The *CE.* says of the Book of Enoch:

> "It has left its imprint on the New Testament and the works of the early Fathers. . . . Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and even St. Augustine suppose the work to be *a genuine one of the patriarch.* . . . The work is a compilation, and its component parts were written in Palestine by Jews of the orthodox school . . . in the *latter* part of the second century *before* Christ. (See *CE.* i, 602, *passim; EB.* v, 220–224.)

In Fourth Esdras, as in the Apocalypse of Baruch, we find for the first time, the fatal phrase and doctrine, "all mankind sinned with Adam" (*CE.* i, 604), whence Paul forged his fearful and accursed dogma of original sin and eternal damnation. Fourth Maccabees, erroneously ascribed by Eusebius and others to Josephus, dates from

about 4 B. C., just after the death of Herod. It is strongly indoctrinated with the Stoic philosophy, from which the author "derived his four cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance; and it was through Fourth Maccabees that this category was appropriated by early Christian ascetical writers" (*CE.* i, 605–6), and later "canonized" by the Church. (*CE.* xi, 391.)

The Assumption of Moses was forged in the name of that Worthy as its genuine author, about the beginning of or early in the Christian era, with the ostensible purpose of confirming the Mosaic Laws in Deuteronomy. It gives the parting communications of Moses to his successor, Joshua, and unfolds, in a series of pretended predictions, delivered in written form, the course of Israel's history down to Herod's time. Here is found the legend of the dispute between Michael Archangel and Satan over the body of Moses, which the Christian Epistle of Jude (v. 9) cites as God-inspired truth. (*CE.* i, 602–3.) The Book of Jubilees, or little Genesis, is a fabricated embellishment of the Old Testament Genesis, written in the name of Moses somewhere between 135 B. C. and 105 B. C., or 60 A. D., and purports to be a revelation made to Moses by the 'Angel of the Face' of events from Adam to Moses' own day; the Patriarchs are made the exponents of the writer's own Pharisaic views and hopes. It is quoted as good "Scripture" by Greek and Latin Fathers down to the twelfth century, when its forged character was disclosed.

One of the most important of apocryphal apocalyptic forgeries is the Apocalypse of Baruch, "a pseudograph with evident Christian interpolations" (*CE.* i, 604), written by a Jewish Pharisee about 50–90 A. D., who speaks in the first person in the name of Baruch, secretary of the Prophet Jeremiah. The book begins by declaring that the word of the Lord came to him in the *25th year* of King Jeconiah,—who reigned *only three months*, and was carried away captive to Babylon eleven years *before* the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B. C., which event the forgery bewails; it is filled with the Messianic hopes of Jewry at the time of the later fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The book furnishes a setting and background of many distinctive New Testament doctrines and problems, treating of Original Sin, which it traces to the sin of Adam, Forgiveness, Works, Justification, Free Will, etc., and thus enables us to estimate the contributions made in this respect by Jewish

forgeries to inspired Christian thought as developed in the so-called Pauline Epistles,—which Paul never wrote. Some notable Fathers, such as Athenagoras, St. Justin Martyr, and St. Irenæus, cite Baruch as a Prophet, and vouch for him as on the same footing as Jeremiah, just as Irenæus vouches for Susanna and Bel and the Dragon as the inspired work of Daniel. (*CE.* i, 604; iii, 271; *EB.* i, 220.)

Father Justin, in several chapters, accuses the Jews of having "removed from Esdras and Jeremiah passages clearly mentioning the Saviour," as also from Psalms; he says: "they have altogether taken away many Scriptures from the translation effected by those Seventy elders who were with Ptolemy, and by which this very man who was crucified is proved to have been set forth expressly as God, and man, and as having been crucified, and as dying." (*Dial. Trypho*, chs. lxxi-lxxiv; *ANF.* i, 234–235.) But these passages, says Middleton, were never in the Hebrew Scriptures; "they were not erased by the Jews, but added [to their copies] by the Christians, or forged by Justin." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42.)

To what extent these pious Jewish forgeries formed the background and basis of the Christian doctrines and dogmas of pretended direct "revelation," and informed the thought and utterance of Jesus Christ —the raw material and working tools of the Christian propagandist, may be realized from this explicit acknowledgement:

"The most important and valuable of the extant Jewish apocrypha are those which contain the visions and revelations of the unseen world and the Messianic future. Jewish apocryphal literature is a theme which deserves the attention of all interested in the *development* of the religion of Israel, that body of concepts and tendencies in which are fixed the roots of the great *doctrinal principles of Christianity* itself, just as its Divine Founder took his temporal generation from the stock of orthodox Judaism.

"The Jewish *apocryphas* furnish the completing links in the progress of Jewish theology and fill what would otherwise be a gap, though a small one, between the advanced stage marked by the deutero-canonical—[*i. e.* long doubted but finally accepted]—books and its full maturity *so relatively perfect* that Jesus could suppose as existing in the popular consciousness, without teaching *de novo*, the doctrines of Future Retribution, the Resurrection of the body, and the existence, nature and office of angels." (*CE.* i, 601.)

ll these divine and "revealed" doctrines of Christian faith we have to be originally heathen Zoroastrian mythology, taken over first he Jews, then boldly plagiarized by the ex-Pagan Christians. Dean nan, of St. Paul's, thus describes the universality of these notions ng the heathens and the borrowing by the Jews and Christians vhat were originally Pagan superstitions—now become articles hristian revelation:

> Satan, angels, immortality, resurrection—*all Persian and Zoroastrian rines imbibed by the Jews.* . . . During the whole life of Christ, and early propagation of the religion, it must be borne in mind, that they place in an age, and among a people, which superstition had made so liar with what were supposed to be preternatural events, that the lers awakened no emotion, or were speedily superceded by some new and on the every-ready belief." (Milman, *History of Christianity,* I,

hus, again, the most precious Christian truths, of supposed divine elation" through God, Christ and apostles—were plagiarizations a forged Jewish pseudo-Scriptures, taken over into them from contact with the Zoroastrian Persians. These myths and superons Jesus the Son of God found ready at hand "in the popular sciousness" of the ignorant wonder-craving Jewish peasantry; , Lo, our "revealed" Christian religion! We may begin to suspect later "inspired" books of the "Apostles" as not beyond the taint agan superstition and of the suspicion of Christian forgery.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN "SCRIPTURE" FORGERIES

"Nothing stands in need of LYING but a LIE."

TO SUCH AN EXTENT are the origins of the Christian Religion wrapped in obscurity, due to the labyrinthine confusions and contradictions and forgeries of its early records, that it is quite impossible to extricate, with any degree of confidence, a thread of historic truth from the tangle.

The 27 New Testament booklets, attributed to eight individual "Apostolic" writers, and culled from some 200 admitted forgeries called Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, constitute the present "canonical" or acceptedly inspired compendium of the primitive history of Christianity. The only available method to extract from them approximately just judgments as to the rise and progress of the new system of beliefs, must be by a series of tentative assumptions of relative truth of sundry details of the narratives. By relative truth of any tentatively assumed "fact," I mean such "fact" with relation always to its contradictory,—one or the other must necessarily be false—while both may be—and probably are. For, as virtually every alleged "fact" recorded in Gospels, Acts and Epistles is off-set by a contradictory recital, rendering one or the other untrue, neither can be assumed with assurance; the actuality of either, and of all, is thus made doubtful, and is subject to total rejection as our study of the booklets develops.

On such provisional assumption that sundry of the things recorded possibly may have happened as in one manner or the other related, we are able to reach several obvious conclusions as to the order and approximate times of those dubiously-assumed happenings. In view, however, of what we have seen, and shall soon more abundantly see, of

ıifty and fraudulent methods of ecclesiastical "history"-writing
›ropaganda, we may be prepared for some rude upsettings of
ıherited traditions of Christian fact and faith.

e central character of the Christian faith, Jesus, to assume
ıs a historical personage, was a Jew, as were, by tradition, his
ıles and entourage. As is, of course, well known: "Christianity
ts rise in Judaism; its Founder and His disciples were orthodox
and the latter maintained their Jewish practices, at least for a
after the day of Pentecost. The Jews themselves looked upon
›llowers of Christ as a mere Israelitish sect, . . . 'the sect of
azarenes' (Acts xxiv, 15),"—the believers in the Promised Mes-
(*CE.* iii, 713.) In this they were grievously deceived and disap-
ɛd, as, too, the world knows: "Christ's humble and obscure life,
ɛ in the ignominious death on the cross, was the very opposite of
the Jews expected of their Christ." (*CE.* i, 620.)

us was a native of Galilee, "his own country" (Mt. ii, 23; xiii,
), *or* of Judæa, "his own country" (John iv, 43–44). He was
'in the days of Herod the King" (Mt. ii, 1), about 6 B. C., *or*
Cyrenius was governor of Syria" (Luke ii, 1–7), about 7 A. D.,
ıe 13 years later. (*CE.* viii, 377; *EB.* i, 307–8.) The destructive
ıdictions as to his lineage and parentage, and other essential
ıulars, are reserved for opportune notice. Jesus became a Jewish
ian religious teacher of the zealot reformer type; so zealous
ıis own family thought him insane and sent out to apprehend
Mark iii, 31); many of the people said of him, "He hath a devil,
mad" (John x, 20); his own disciples, seeing his raid into the
le after the money-changers, shook their heads and muttered
›verb: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John

.

ministry, of about one year, according to the first three Gospels,
ıe three years according to the fourth, was, by his own repeated
ion, limited exclusively to his own Jewish people: "I am not
ut unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. xv, 24; cf.
ii, 25–26; xiii, 46; Rom. xv, 8); and he straitly enjoined on
›elve Apostles: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into
ty of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost
of the house of Israel" (Mt. x, 5–6); to the woman of Canaan

who pleaded with him to have mercy on her daughter, "grievously vexed with a devil," he retorted: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs" (Mt. xv, 22–28; vii, 6). His own announcement, and his command to the Twelve, was "Preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt. x, 7),—the exclusively Hebraic Kingdom of the Baptist (Mt. iii, 2), as of the Jewish Messianic apocrypha which we have noticed. Jesus lived at the height of the "age of apocryphal literature," and in due time got into it, voluminously.

Before his death, time and again he made and repeated the assurance—the most positive and iterated of all the sayings attributed to him—of the *immediate end of the world* and of his quick triumphant return to establish the Kingdom of God in the new earth and reign on the reëstablished throne of David forever. Time and again he said and repeated: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom" (Mt. xvi, 28; Mk. ix, 1; Lk. ix, 27); "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done" (Mk. xiii, 30).—So quickly would this "second coming" be, that when the Twelve were sent out on their first preaching tour in little Palestine, their Master assured them: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come" (Mt. x, 23). Caiaphas, the high priest before whom Jesus was led after his capture in the Garden, solemnly conjured him "By the living God" for the truth; and Jesus replied: "Nevertheless I say unto *you*, Hereafter *shall ye see* the Son of man . . . coming in the clouds of heaven." (Mt. xxvi, 63, 64; Mk. xiv, 61, 62.) Some people are expecting him yet. Of course, there were, could be, none but Jews in heaven, or in this new Kingdom of Heaven on the new earth: "Salvation is of the Jews." (John iv, 22.) It was 144,000 Jews, the "sealed" saints, who alone constituted the original Jewish "Kingdom of God" (Rev. vii).

With these explicit data we arrive at the first obvious and positive conclusion: With the expectation of a quick and sudden end of the world and of all things human, no books were written on the subject in that generation or, for a little leeway, the next or so, after the death of the expected returning King. The scant number of credulous Jews who accepted this preachment as "Gospel truth" and lived in this

expectation, were nourished with neighborhood gossip and oral traditions of the "good news," and needed and had no written books of inspired record of these things. Thus many years passed. Only as the dread consummation was delayed, and the hope deferred sickened the hearts of the expectant Jews and they waned in faith, and as accused by Paul and Barnabas, "put it from you," did the defeated propagandists of the "Faith that failed at the Cross," give the shoulder to the Jews and "turn to the Gentiles" (Acts xiii, 46), and begin to expand the failing new Jewish faith among the superstitious Pagans of the countries round about. But this was still by the spoken word; on all the supposititious "missionary tours" the Word was spread by word of mouth; written gospel books were not yet. When at last, the "coming" being still unrealized—these books began to be written, we can accurately determine something of the order of their writing, and finally, though negatively, the approximate times when they were written, by ascertaining when they were *not yet* written.

We have seen that for a century and more the only "Scriptures" used by the Jewish propagandists of the Christ were the Greek Septuagint translations of the old Hebrew sacred writings, "the Law and the Prophets" (*CE.* v, 702; i, 635); supplemented by sundry Jewish apocrypha and the Pagan Sibylline Oracles; these were the only "authorities" appealed to by the early "Fathers" for the propaganda of the new faith. Indubitably, if the wonderful "histories" of their Christ and the inspired pretended writings of his first Apostles, forming now the New Testament, had then existed, even in scraps of writing, they would have been the most precious and potent documents of propaganda, would have been snatched at and quoted and appealed to with infinite zeal and ardor, as they have been through the centuries since. But, for some 150 years, as we shall see, little or nothing besides Old Testament and Pagan Oracles were known or quoted. As said by the great critic, Salomon Reinach, "With the exception of Papias, who speaks of a narrative by Mark, and a collection of sayings of Jesus, no Christian writer of the first half of the second century (*i. e., up to* 150 A. D.) quotes the Gospels or their reputed authors." (Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 218.) So, patently, as yet no "Gospels" and but few if any "Epistles" of our "canon" had as yet been written.

Again, we read the 23 booklets from and including Acts to Revelation: there is not a solitary reference to, a word of quotation from, any of our four Gospels; scarce a trace of the wonderful career and miracles of Jesus the Christ; not a word of his "gospel" or teachings mentioned or quoted. These Epistles, indeed, "preach Christ crucified" (from oral tradition), as the basis of the propagandists' own "gospel." But the written "Gospel of Jesus Christ" (his life and words and deeds), was unknown: indeed, jealous of the so-called Petrine preaching which "perverts the gospel of Christ" as preached by him, the soi-disant Apostle Paul fulminates: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which *we* have preached, let him be accursed" (Gal. i, 7, 8);—so early did priestly intolerance and priestly curses on opponents come into holy vogue. Therefore the conclusion is inevitable, that when those 23 Acts and Epistles were written, none of the four "Gospel" biographies of Jesus the Christ had yet seen the light. "Written Gospels are neither mentioned nor implied in the NT epistles, nor in that of Clemens Romanus, nor, probably, in that of Barnabas, nor in the Didaché. Luke (i, 1–4) implies that 'many gospels' were current" (*EB.* ii, 1809), at the time that Gospel was written.

The Acts and Epistles, therefore, with Revelation, were written *before* any of the Gospel biographies. If these Christ-histories had existed, how eagerly would they have been seized upon to garnish and glorify the preachment of the early propagandists of the Faith that failed at the Cross,—and would have perished wholly but for the all-believing Pagan Gentiles, who, when they heard it, "were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord" (Acts xiii, 48), as orally delivered.

"THE AGE OF APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE"

As the long years passed and one generation of disappointed "Messiah" Jews was gathered unto its fathers and was followed by another, the believers in the promised "second coming" for the establishment of the Jewish Kingdom grew restless, and made pertinent complaint, "Saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter ii, 4),—and as they yet continue.

Dubbing these reasonable but disturbing inquirers "scoffers," the crafty Peter tried in typical priestly form to squirm out of the embarrassing situation created by the positive promises of the Christ and the inspired preachments of himself and his apostolic confrères, by the shifty rejoinder: "But, beloved ["*scoffers*"], be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter ii, 8)—which doesn't mean anything for an honest answer; and time and again they cajole the impatient credulous: "Ye have need of patience; . . . for yet *a little while*, and he that shall come, will come." (Heb. x, 36, 37; cf. 1 Thess. iv, 16–18; 2 Thess. iii, 5; James v, 7, 8; *et passim.*) But he isn't come yet, these 2000 years.

It was at this critical juncture, to revive and stimulate the jaded hope of the Jewish believers and to spread the propaganda amongst the all-believing Pagans, that the written Christ-tales began to be worked up by the Christian propagandists. Before their admiring eyes they had for models the "whole literature" of Jewish apocryphal or forged writings, plus the Pagan Oracles: with immense zeal and industry they set about to imitate the example before them, and to reforge these Jewish and heathen forgeries to more definite Christian uses, and to forge anew another whole literature of distinctively Christian forgeries and fabulous histories of the Christ. "In this form of propaganda the Christians proved themselves to be apt pupils of the Jews. So common, indeed, had become in early Christian times, the invention of such oracles that Celsus terms Christians *Sibyllistai*, believers in sibyls, or sibyl-mongers" (*EB.* i, 246), that is, peddlers of Christian forgeries in Pagan form (*Ib.* p. 261). How great was this pious fabrication we can only judge from the two hundred, more or less, of false histories, gospels, epistles and revelations which have survived, entire or fragmentary, or by title only, through the long intervening centuries of faith, and of which 27 are yet cherished as of Divine inspiration.

"THE IDEA OF INSPIRATION"

Before sketching the welter of these lying works of Christian hands and childish minds, we may define, by high priestly authority, the

status of the problem of divine inspiration, and just how the notion of "canonicity" or official inspiration, came to be, now attributed to, now withdrawn from, this heterogeneous mass or mess of pious scribblings, and finally clung to only 27 of yet asserted sanctity. These admissions are very illuminating.

We have seen that the Hebrew Old Testament itself "reveals no formal notion of inspiration," though, we are assured, "the later Jews *must have* possessed the idea" (*CE.* iii, 269);—thus only an idea or notion somehow acquired, but not through divine illumination, for as we read, of all the mass of Jewish holy forgeries "each of them has at one time or another been treated as canonical" or divinely inspired. (*EB.* i, 250.) Whether the Christian notion or idea as to the divine inspiration of their own new forgeries was of any better quality may now appear.

The New Testament and the inspired Apostles are silent on the subject and left the matter to serious doubts and disputations for many centuries: "There are no indications in the New Testament . . . of a definite new Canon bequeathed by the Apostles to the Church, *or of a strong self-witness* to Divine inspiration," admits the *CE.* (iii, 274); that is, there is nothing in the 27 booklets which would lead to the suspicion of their "inspiration" or truth. There was then no *Church* for them to *bequeath* to, nor was the Canon settled, as we shall see: "It was not until about the middle of the second century—[when we shall see the books were really written]—that under the rubric of *Scripture* the New Testament writings were assimilated to the Old. . . . But it should be remembered that the inspired character of the New Testament is a *Catholic dogma*, and *must* therefore *in some way* have been revealed to, and taught by, Apostles"! (*Ib.* p. 275.) This is a strikingly queer bit of clerical dialectic, and leaves the question of the "some way" of revelation to the Apostles and of their transmission of the "dogma" to posterity, in a nebulously unsatisfying state.

Further, the dubious and disputed status of the sacred writings through centuries, and the ultimate settlement of the controversies by the *ipse dixit* of a numerical majority of the Council of Trent, in 1546,—after the Reformation had forced the issue, is thus admitted: "The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament

existing from the beginning, that is, from Apostolic times, *has no foundation in history.* The canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, is *the result of a development,* of a process at once stimulated by disputes with doubters, both within and without the Church, and retarded by *certain obscurities and natural hesitations,* and which did not reach its final term until the dogmatic definition of the Tridentine Council. . . . And this want of an organized distribution, secondarily to the absence of an early fixation of the Canon, left room for *variations and doubts* which lasted far into the centuries." (*CE.* iii, 274.) The *modus operandi* of the Holy Council in ultimately "canonizing" Jerome's old Vulgate Version, and its motive for doing so, are thus exposed by the keen pen of the author of *The Rise and Fall:*

"When the Council of Trent resolved to pronounce sentence on the Canon of Scripture, the opinion which prevailed, after some debate, was to declare the Latin Vulgate authentic and *almost* infallible; and this sentence, which was guarded by formidable anathemas, secured all the books of the Old and New Testament which composed that ancient version. . . . When the merit of that version was discussed, the majority of the theologians urged, with confidence and success, that it was absolutely necessary to receive the Vulgate as authentic and inspired, unless they wished to abandon the victory to the Lutherans, and the honors of the Church to the Grammarians." (Gibbon, *A Vindication,* v, 2; *Istoria del Consiglio Tridentino,* L. ii, p. 147.) A number of these books were bitterly disputed and their authenticity and inspiration denied by the leading Reformers, Luther, Grotius, Calvin, etc., and excluded from their official lists, until finally the Reformed Church followed the example of the Church hopeless of reform and swallowed the canon whole, as we have it today,—minus, of course, the *Tobit, Judith,* and like inspired buffooneries of the True Bible.

Such books and the vicissitudes of their authenticity are thus described: "Like the Old Testament, the New has its deutero-canonical [*i. e.* doubted] books and portions of books, their canonicity having formerly been a subject of some controversy in the Church. These are, for entire books: the Epistle to the Hebrews, that of James, the Second and Third of John, Jude, and Apocalypse; giving seven in all as the number of the N. T. contested books. The formerly disputed

passages are three: the closing section of St. Mark's Gospel, xvi, 9–20, about the apparitions of Christ after the resurrection; the verses in Luke about the bloody sweat of Jesus, xxii, 43, 44; the *Pericope Adulterae,* or narrative of the woman taken in adultery, St. John, vii, 53 to viii, 11. Since the Council of Trent *it is not permitted for a Catholic to question* the inspiration of these passages." (*CE.* iii, 274.) Besides the forgery of the above and other books as a whole, we shall see many other instances of "interpolated" or forged passages in the Christian books.

"THE LYING PEN OF THE SCRIBES"

Speaking of the doubtful historicity of the celebrated Æsop of the famous Fables which go under his name, a critic well states a valid test of historicity: "We may well doubt, however, whether he (Æsop) ever existed; we have the most varied accounts of him, many of which are on their face pure inventions; and the fables which passed under his name were certainly not written until long after the period in which he is supposed to have lived." (*NIE.* i, 191.) We may have occasion to apply this test to the personality of Jesus of Nazareth and sundry apostolic personages; in any event it is peculiarly applicable to the numerous Christian stories and fables treating of them, which on their face are pure inventions, and which were admittedly forged in the names of Jesus himself and of all of his Apostles and of many of the shining lights of the new Christian faith, just as we have seen was done in the Jewish forgeries in the names of the Old Testament notables from Adam on down the catalogue.

Leaving for the moment aside the 27 presently accepted booklets of the N. T., and admitting the many Christian forgeries of Christ-fables, *CE.* thus apologetically explains: "The genuine Gospels are silent about long stretches of the life of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Joseph. This reserve of the Evangelists did not satisfy the pardonable curiosity of many Christians eager for details. . . . Enterprising spirits responded to this natural craving *by pretended gospels* full of romantic fables, and fantastic and striking details; their fabrications were eagerly read and *accepted as true* by common folk who were *devoid of any critical faculty* and who *were predisposed*

to believe what so luxuriously fed their pious curiosity. Both Catholics and Gnostics were concerned in writing these fictions. The *former* had no motive other than that of a PIOUS FRAUD." (*CE.* i, 606.) The motive above admitted for feeding with pious frauds the "natural craving" of the ignorant and superstitious Christians for marvel-mongering by the Church, is confirmed by a distinguished historian: "A vast and ever-increasing crowd of converts from paganism, who had become such from worldly considerations, and still hankered after wonders like those in which their forefathers had from time immemorial believed, lent a ready ear to assertions which, to more hesitating or better-instructed minds, would have seemed to *carry imposture on their very face.*" (Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, i, 309.)

This being thus frankly confessed, our clerical writer describes the general character of these pious frauds: "The Christian apocryphal writings in general imitate the books of the N. T., and therefore, with a few exceptions, fall under the description of Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses." (*CE.* i, 606.) Further apologizing for these Christian forgeries, and giving a smear of clerical whitewash to the forgers, it is speciously pleaded, that "the term *apocryphal* in connection with special gospels must be understood as bearing no more unfavorable an import than uncanonical." They were *forgeries* pure and simple; and their pious value is urged, that "the apocryphal Gospels help us to understand the religious conditions of the second and third centuries,"—as indeed they do, in a light very damaging to any suspicion of truthfulness, common honesty, or anything above the most mediocre intelligence of the pious Fathers and Faithful who put these gross fabrications into circulation in the name and for the sake of Christ. Their pious plea is: "*Amor Christi est cui satisfecimus.*" (*Ib.* p. 606.) Of these pious frauds it adds: "The quasi-evangelistic compositions concerning Christ . . . are *all* of *Orthodox* origin." (*Ib.* p. 607.)

"CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES"—FORGED

When the new Faith went forth to conquer the Pagan world for Christ, the pious Greek Fathers and priests of the Propaganda soon

felt the need of something of more up-to-date effectiveness than Old Testament texts and Sibylline Oracles; they needed something concrete out of the New Dispensation to "show" to the superstitious Pagans to win them to the Christ and his Church: something tangible, visible; compellingly authentic proofs. Like arms of proof for the holy warfare, the invincible weapons of truth—"the whole armour of God"—they forged outright for the conquest of the unbeliever. What more convincing and compelling proofs of Jesus the Christ, his holy Apostles, and their wondrous works of over a century ago, than the following authentic and autograph documents and records, held before doubting eyes:

A "GOSPEL" WRITTEN BY JESUS CHRIST'S OWN HAND;
LETTERS AND PORTRAITS OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE;
LETTERS WRITTEN BY HIS VIRGIN MOTHER;
PILATE'S OFFICIAL REPORT TO THE EMPEROR OF THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFICTION OF JESUS, WITH PILATE'S CONFESSION OF FAITH;
THE REPLY OF TIBERIUS, AND THE TRIAL OF PILATE;
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF THE ROMAN SENATE ABOUT JESUS;
GOSPELS, EPISTLES, ACTS, BY EVERY ONE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES;
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF CHURCH LAW AND GOVERNMENT, WRITTEN IN GREEK, BY THE APOSTLES;
RECORDS OF THE EARLIEST "POPES" AND "APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION;"
SCORES OF OTHER PIOUS FORGED DOCUMENTS TO BE RELATED BELOW.

Armed with lying credentials and "proofs" of the fictitious persons and performances for which credence must be won among the credulous pagans, the priests and Vicars of God propagated their stupendous "LIES to the glory of God" and the exaltation of the Church. We shall catalogue these crude forgeries somewhat more fully, and look into some of the more notorious.

FORGED GOSPELS, ACTS, EPISTLES

Half a hundred of false and forged Apostolic "Gospels of Jesus Christ," together with more numerous other "Scripture" forgeries, was the output, so far as known now, of the lying pens of the pious Christians of the first two centuries of the Christian "Age of Apocryphal Literature"; all going to swell the "very large number of

apocryphal writings of distinctly Christian origin which were produced from the second century onward, to satisfy an unhealthy craving for the occult and marvelous or to embellish the stories of the saints." (*NIE.*, i, 746.) These N. T. apocrypha include "numerous works purporting to have been *written by apostles or their associates*, but not able to secure a general or permanent recognition. These may be classified thus: (a) Gospels; (b) Acts of Apostles; (c) Epistles; (d) Apocalypses; (e) Didactic Works; (f) Hymns. (*Ib.* p. 748.) "The name Gospel," says *CE.* (vi, 656), "as indicating a written account of Christ's words and deeds, has been, and still is, applied to *a large number* of narratives of Christ's life, which circulated both before and after the composition of our Third Gospel (cf. Luke i, 1–4). The titles of *some fifty such works* have come down to us. . . . It is only, however, in connection with some twenty of these 'Gospels' that some information has been preserved. . . . Most of them, as far as can be made out, are late productions, the apocryphal character of which is generally admitted by contemporary [*i. e.*, present day] scholars." Naming first as Nos. 1–4 "The Canonical Gospels," now falsely labelled with the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the twenty best known ones are listed as follows; *viz:* The Gospels according to the Hebrews; of Peter; According to the Egyptians; of Matthias; of Philip; of Thomas; the *Proto-Evangelium* of James; Gospel of Nicodemus (*Acta Pilati*); of the Twelve Apostles; of Basilides; of Valentius; of Marcion; of Eve; of Judas; the Writing Genna Marias; the Gospel *Teleioseos.* (*CE.* vi, 656.)

Individual Gospels were forged in the names of each of the Twelve Apostles, severally, and a joint fabrication under the name of "The Gospel of the Twelve," was put into the mouths of the twelve Apostles, using the first person to give the ear-marks of authenticity to their forged utterances; and separately, "Almost every one of the Apostles had a Gospel fathered upon him by one early sect or another." (*EB.* i, 259.) Several seem to have been fathered upon Matthew besides the one that wrongly heads the list of the "canonical Four," such as the Gospel of Matthias, Traditions of Matthias, also a supposed and *probably non-existent* writing in Hebrew hypothesized as the basic document of the Four; probably also the so-called *Logia*, a papyrus scrap of one sheet discovered at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, and containing

alleged sayings of Jesus which in part correspond with, in part radically differ from the sayings attributed to him in the Four. He was also made responsible for a so-called Gospel of St. Matthew, dating from the 4th or 5th century, which "purports to have been written by Matthew and translated by St. Jerome." (*CE.* i, 608.)

This authority also lists the famous *Protevangelium Jacobi,* or Infancy Gospel of James, the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, that of Gamaliel, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, also According to the Egyptians; of the Nazarenes; Gospels of St. Peter, of St. Philip, of St. Thomas, of St. Bartholomew, of St. Andrew, of Barnabas, of Thaddeus, even notable forged Gospels of Judas Iscariot, and of Mother Eve; also the Gospel by Jesus Christ. We have the Gospel of Nicodemus, the History of Joseph the Carpenter, the Descent into Hades, the Descent of Mary, the Ascents of James, the Prophecy of Hystaspes, the Didaché or Teachings of the Apostles; the Gospel of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, the *Transitum Mariæ* or Evangelium Joannis. This last named pious Christian work, as described by *CE.* (i, 607–8) is forged in the name of St. John the Apostle, and is "prefaced with a spurious Letter of the Bishop of Sardis, Melito"; it records how "the Apostles are preternaturally transported from different quarters of the globe to the Virgin's deathbed, those who have died being resurrected for the purpose"; a Jew who dares touch the sacred body instantly loses both hands, which are restored through the mediation of the Apostles. Christ, accompanied by a band of angels, comes down to receive his mother's soul; "the Apostles bear the body to Gethsemane and deposit it in a tomb, whence it is taken up alive to Heaven"; this being an extraordinary miracle, for the body was dead and the soul carried to heaven from her home and the dead body laid in the grave, where it comes to life again for the Heaventrip. This clumsy fable, says *CE.*, considerably "influenced the Fathers" (*Ib.* i, 608), who were notoriously childish-minded. A very noted and notorious forgery was the Gospel of Paul and Thecla, of which Father Tertullian relates, that this story was fabricated by an Elder of Asia Minor, who, when convicted of the fraud—[this being the only known instance of such action],—confessed that he had perpetrated it "for the love of St. Paul." (Reinach, *Orpheus,* p. 235.) The *Protevangelium Jacobi* was "an Apocryphal work by a

fanciful fabulist, unhampered by knowledge of Jewish affairs, composed before the end of the second century with a view to removing the *glaring contradictions* between Matthew and Mark," regarding the birth and life of Jesus Christ. (*EB.* iii, 3343.) An "Epistle on the Martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul was at a later period attributed to St. Linus. . . . It is apocryphal, and of later date than the History of the Martyrdom of the two Apostles, by some attributed to Marcellus, which is also apocryphal." (*CE.* ix, 273; see *Acta Apostolorum, Apocrypha,* xiv.) Other noted Fatherly fabrications were the celebrated Epistles I and II of Clement to the Corinthians, and the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies,* purporting to be written by the very doubtful Bishop of Rome of that name; very voluminous, and written about 140 A. D., not a line of New Testament "scriptures" do they quote, but they quote freely from the O. T. and from various Jewish, Christian and Pagan works. (*EB.* iii, 3486.)

Besides the above complete "Gospel" forgeries, there are several more, and fragments of others, which purport to contain "sayings" attributed to Jesus which are not contained in the Four Gospels; and which are known as *Agrapha,* that is, things *not written.* Among these are the *Logia* of Oxyrhynchus above mentioned; the Fayum gospel-fragment, a papyrus purporting to give words of Christ to Peter at the Last Supper, "in a form which diverges largely by omissions from any in the canonical gospels." (*EB.* i, 258.) These *Agrapha* "do not embrace the lengthy sections ascribed to Jesus in the '*Didiscalia*' and the '*Pistis Sophia*'; these works also contain some brief quotations of alleged words of Jesus; . . . nor the *Sayings* contained in religious romances, such as we find in the apocryphal Gospels, the apocryphal Acts, or the Letter of Christ to Abgar. . . . In patristic citations . . . Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, make *false quotations,*"—citing instances. (*CE.* i, 225, 226.) In the class of *Agrapha* are also "words in the Gospels not regarded as genuine, as Mt. vi, 13b; xvii, 21; Mk. xvi, 9–20; John vii, 53; viii, 2; also alleged quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament not found in the Old Testament." (*NIE.* i, 240.)

Of apocryphal Acts of Apostles we are edified by the Acts, or Travels (Greek, *Pereodoi*) of Peter, (and separately) of John, of Thomas, of Andrew, and of Paul; another Acts of Philip, Acts of

Matthew, of Bartholomew, of John, of Judas Thomas. There is a whose collection of *Martyrdoms* of the several Apostles. Of apocryphal Epistles, the most famous is the Correspondence between the *Abgar* of Edessa, and Jesus; between the Roman Philosopher Seneca and Paul; apocryphal Epistles of Paul, to the Laodiceans, to the Alexandrians, the Third Epistle to the Corinthians. Forged Apocalypses abound, of which that of Peter, the Vision of Hermas, the Vision of Paul, the Apocalypse of Paul, the Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary. The didactic Preaching of Peter, the Teaching of the Apostles, or *Didaché*, containing warnings against Judaism and polytheism, and words of Jesus to the Apostles; another set containing a lament of Peter for his denial of Jesus, and various ethical maxims; a Syriac Preaching of Simon Cephas; a collection of Hymns or Odes of Solomon. As if these were not enough for Christian edification, "many heretical or Gnostic works of the same apocryphal kind were changed into orthodox by expurgation of objectionable matter or by rewriting, using the same outlines; thus a series of Catholic Acts was produced, written from an orthodox standpoint." (*NIE.* i, 748.) A very celebrated forgery was the Shepherd of Hermas, forged by Hermas, supposed brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome, about 150 A. D. See the vast catalogue (*CE.* i, 601–615).

A whole literature of Christian forgery grew up and had immense vogue under the designation of *Acta Pilati*, or Acts of Pilate. One of the most popular of these was called the Gospel of Nicodemus, of which *CE.* says: "The alleged Hebrew original is attributed to Nicodemus; the title is of medieval origin. The apocryphon gained wide credit in the Middle Ages. . . . The 'Acta' are of orthodox composition. The book aimed at gratifying the desire for extra-evangelical details concerning our Lord, and at the same time, to strengthen *faith in the Resurrection of Christ*, and at general edification." (i, 3.) The Descent into Hades is an enlargement of the reputed official acts or reports of Pilate to the Roman Emperor. Speaking of the Pilate Literature as a whole, the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, in a paragraph which pointedly admits the falsifying frauds of three luminous liars and forgers of the Faith, Justin Martyr, the great Bishop Eusebius, and Father Tertullian, explains that these *Acta* "dwell upon the part which a representative [Pilate] of the Roman Empire played

in the supreme events of our Lord's life, and to shape the testimony of Pontius Pilate, even at the cost of exaggeration and amplification—[hear the soft-pedaling note], into a weapon of apologetic defense, making the official bear witness to the miracles, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. . . . It is characterized by exaggerating Pilate's weak defense of Jesus into a strong sympathy and practical belief in his Divinity." (*CE.* i, 609.) Father Tertullian, in his *Apologia* (xxi), relates the Report of Pilate to the Emperor, sketching the miracles and death of Jesus Christ, and says, "All these things Pilate announced to Tiberius Cæsar." Bishop Eusebius thus relates the fable as taken from the *Apologia* of Father Tertullian: "The fame of Our Lord's remarkable resurrection and ascension being now spread abroad, . . . Pontius Pilate transmits to Tiberius an account of the circumstances concerning the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. . . . In this account, he also intimated that he had ascertained other miracles respecting him, and that having now risen from the dead, he *was believed to be a God* by the great mass of the people. Tiberius referred the matter to the Senate, . . . being obviously pleased with the doctrine; but the Senate, as they had not proposed the matter, [rejected it]. But he continued in his opinion, threatening death to the accusers of the Christians; a divine providence infusing this into his mind, that the Gospel having freer scope in its commencement, might spread everywhere over the world." (Eusebius, *HE.* II, 2.) Father Justin Martyr, in his *Apologia*, "appeals confidently as a proof of them to the '*Acta*' or records of Pilate, existing in the imperial archives." Eusebius relates spurious anti-Christian Acts of Pilate composed in the fourth century, the *Acta Pilati* or Gospel of Nicodemus, *Anphora Pilati, Paradoseis;* a still later fabrication is the Latin *Epistola Pilati ad Tiberium.* Also the Letter of Herod to Pilate and Letter of Pilate to Herod; the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea. The pseudo-Correspondence of Jesus with Abgar, King of Edessa, is found in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*, I, xiii), "*who vouches that he himself translated it from the Syriac documents in the archives of Edessa,* the metropolis of Eastern Syria. . . . 'This,' adds Eusebius, 'happened in the year 340 of the Seleucid era, corresponding to A. D. 28–29.'" (*CE.* i, 609, 610.) More monumental lies to the glory of God than those of the distinguished Church Fathers are not.

"A collection of apocryphal Acts of the Apostles was formed in the Frankish Church in the sixth century, probably by a monk." (*Ib.* p. 610.) There were also "the works accredited to Dionysius the Areopagite, who was not the author of the works bearing his name." (*Ib.* p. 638.)

Of highest importance because "these Acts are the chief source for details of the martyrdom of the two great Apostles," as admits the *CE.*, special notice is made of the "Catholic" *Acts of Sts. Peter and Paul,* of which many MSS of "the legend" existed, the material import of which is thus not quite honestly summarized: "The Jews have been aroused by the news of Paul's intended visit (to Rome), and induce Nero to forbid it. Nevertheless the Apostle secretly enters Italy; his companion is mistaken for himself at Puteoli and beheaded. In retribution that city is swallowed up by the sea. Peter receives Paul at Rome with joy. The preaching of the Apostles converts multitudes and even the Empress. Simon Magus traduces the Christian teachers, and there is a test of strength in miracles between that magician and the Apostles, which takes place in the presence of Nero. Simon essays a flight to heaven but falls in the Via Sacra and is dashed to pieces. Nevertheless, Nero is bent on the destruction of Peter and Paul. The latter is beheaded on the Ostian Way, and Peter is crucified at his request head downward. Before his death he relates to the people the '*Quo Vadis?*' story. Three men from the East carry off the Apostles' bodies but are overtaken. St. Peter is buried at 'the place called the Vatican,' and Paul on the Ostian Way. *These Acts are the chief source for details of the martyrdom of the two great Apostles.* They are also noteworthy as emphasizing the close concord between the Apostolic founders of the Roman Church." (*CE.* i, 611–12.)

The reader is desired to bear well in mind the foregoing paragraph, and particularly the last two sentences, the former of immense significance when we come to review the falsified fiction of the foundation of the Roman Church by Peter,—the "chief source" of which portentous claim is confessedly founded on the crude and fantastic "legend" of an admittedly forged document. Another admission of forgery by the Fathers, before introducing them formally, may be noted: "Such known works as the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas,

the *Didaché* or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and the Apostolic Canons and Constitutions, though formally apocryphal, really belong to *patristic literature*" (*CE.* i, 601),—that is, they are forged writings of the Fathers.

THE FORGED "APOSTLES' CREED"

The "Apostles' Creed," forged by the Fathers several centuries after the Apostles, must be added to the Patristic list. Of this famous Creed, which every Christian presumably knows by rote and piously recites in numberless services, *CE.* again confesses it spurious: "Throughout the Middle Ages it was generally believed that the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, while still under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, composed our present Creed, each of the Apostles contributing one of the Twelve articles. This legend dates back to the sixth century, and is foreshadowed still earlier in a sermon attributed to St. Ambrose, which *takes notice* that the Creed was 'pieced out by twelve separate workmen.'" (*CE.* i, 629.) Indeed, "not a few works have been falsely attributed to St. Ambrose." (*CE.* i, 387; cf. p. 406.)

We may smile at the peculiarly clerical way in which *CE.* would "whitewash" the great Bishop of Milan, St. Ambrose (c. 340–397), from the lie direct which admittedly he told in that Sermon,—saying that the Bishop simply "takes notice that the Creed was pieced out," *etc.;* the truth being that Ambrose positively affirmed the fable as truth, and may have invented it. His positive words are: "that the Twelve Apostles, as skilled artificers, assembled together, and made a key by their common advice, that is, the Creed; by which the darkness of the devil is disclosed, that the light of Christ may appear." (Ambrose, *Opera,* tom. iii., *Sermon* 38, p. 265; quoted in *The New Testament Apocrypha,* New York, The Truth Seeker Co.)—a work which I feel impelled to commend to all who wish to know at first hand the 25 remarkable Church "Gospel" forgeries there collected.

THE FORGED ATHANASIAN CREED

In likewise the celebrated Athanasian Creed of the Church, attributed to St. Athanasius and so held by the Church "until the seven-

teenth century" (*CE.* ii, 34), with most evil results, is now an admitted forgery. In words of Gibbon: "St. Athanasius is not the author of the creed; it does not appear to have existed within a century after his death; it was composed in Latin, therefore in one of the Western provinces. Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, was so much amazed by this extraordinary composition, that he frankly pronounced it to be the work of a drunken man." (*Petav. Dogmat. Theologica,* tom. ii, 1, vii, c. 8, p. 687; Gibbon, p. 598.)

JESUS CHRIST'S FORGED LETTERS

We may look for a moment at several of the most notorious of the forgeries perpetrated for the glory of God and for imposture upon the superstitious Christians to enhance Pagan credulity in the tales of Christ. If the Gospel tales were true, why should God need pious lies to give them credit? Lies and forgeries are only needed to bolster up falsehood: "Nothing stands in need of lying but a lie." But Jesus Christ must needs be propagated by lies upon lies; and what better proof of his actuality than to exhibit letters written by him in his own handwriting? The "Little Liars of the Lord" were equal to the forgery of the signature of their God,—false letters in his name, as above cited from that exhaustless mine of clerical falsities, the *Catholic Encyclopedia,* which again describes them, and proves that they were forged by their great Bishop of Cæsaria: "The historian Eusebius records [*HE.* I, xii], a legend which he himself *firmly believes* [?], concerning a correspondence that took place between Our Lord and the local potentate (Abgar) at Edessa. Three documents relate to this correspondence: (1) the Letter of Abgar to Our Lord; (2) Our Lord's answer; (3) a picture of Our Lord, painted from life. This legend enjoyed a great popularity, both in the East, and in the West, during the Middle Ages. Our Lord's Letter was copied on parchment, marble, and metal, and used as a talisman or an amulet." (*CE.* i, 42.) But it is not true, as we have seen already confessed, that Eusebius innocently believed that these forgeries were genuine—for they were all shamelessly forged by Eusebius himself: "*who vouches that he himself translated it from the Syriac documents in the archives of Edessa.*" (*CE.* i, 610.) Again it is said by *CE.*, that these forged

letters, with the portrait, were "accepted by Eusebius without hesitation, and used by Addision in his work on Christian Evidences as genuine" (*Ib.* vi, 217).

It should be mentioned, first, that *Abgar* was not a personal name of a King of Edessa, but was a generic title of all the rulers of that small state: "By this *title* all the toparchs of Edessa were called, just as the Roman Emperors were called Cæsars, the Kings of Egypt Pharaohs or Ptolemies, the Kings of Syria Antiochi." (*ANF.* viii, 651, note.) With this first check on the forging Bishop, here is what he said in his Church History, Book I, chapter the thirteenth. (p. 63 *seq.*) Note the false fervor of the holy Bishop to sugar-coat his circumstantial and commodious lie and fraud: "While the Godhead of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ was proclaimed among all men by reason of the astonishing mighty-works which He wrought, and myriads, even from countries remote from the land of Judæa, who were afflicted with sicknesses and diseases of every kind, were coming to Him in the hope of being healed, King Abgar sent Him a letter asking Him to come and heal him of his disease. But our Saviour at the time he asked Him did not comply with his request. Yet He deigned to give him a letter in reply. . . . Thou hast in writing the evidence of these things, which is taken from the Book of Records which was at Edessa: for at that time the Kingdom was still standing. In the documents, then, which were there, in which was contained whatever was done by those of old down to the time of *Abgar*, these things are also found preserved down to the present hour. There is, however, nothing to prevent our hearing the very letters themselves, which have been *taken by us from the archives*, and are in words to this effect, translated from Aramaic into Greek.

"Copy of the letter which was written by King Abgar to Jesus, and sent to Him by the hand of Ananias—[the Bishop was the Ananias in this tale, and aptly named his letter-carrier],—the Tabularius, to Jerusalem:

'Abgar the Black, sovereign of the country, to Jesus, the good Saviour, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem: Peace. I have heard about Thee, and about the healing which is wrought by Thy hands without drugs and roots. For, as it is reported, Thou makest the blind to see, and the lame to walk; and Thou cleansest the lepers, and Thou castest out unclean spir-

its and demons, and Thou healest those who are tormented with lingering diseases, and Thou raisest the dead. And when I heard all these things about Thee, I settled in my mind one of two things: either that Thou art God, who has come down from heaven, and doest these things; or that Thou art the Son of God, and doest these things. On this account, therefore, I have written to beg of Thee that Thou wouldest weary Thyself to come to me, and heal this disease which I have. For I have also heard that the Jews murmur against Thee, and wish to do Thee harm. But I have a city, small and beautiful, which is sufficient for two.'

"Copy of those things which were written by Jesus in reply by the hand of Ananias, the Tabularius, to Abgar, sovereign of the country:—

'Blessed is he that believeth in me, not having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that those who see me will not believe in me, and that those will believe who have not seen me, and will be saved. But touching that which thou hast written to me, that I should come to thee—it is meet that I should finish here all that for the sake of which I have been sent; and, after I have finished it, then I shall be taken up to Him that sent me; and, when I have been taken up, I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease, and give salvation to thee and to those who are with thee.'

"To these letters, moreover, is appended the following, also in the Aramaic tongue";—here following the official record of the visit of one "Thaddæus the apostle, one of the Seventy," and his wonderful works in Edessa. "These things were done in the year 340. In order, moreover, that these things may not have been translated to no purpose word for word from the Aramaic into Greek, they are placed in their order of time here. Here endeth the first book." (*HE.* i, 13; *ANF.* viii, 651–653.) Bishop Eusebius is thus seen to have been a most circumstantial liar and a well-skilled forger for God. From this episcopal lie sprouted like toadstools a whole literature of "various books concerning Abgar the King and Thaddæus the Apostle," in which are preserved to posterity a series of five letters—very much in the style of modern patent-medicine testimonials—written by Abgar to Tiberius Caesar and to neighboring potentates, endorsing Jesus and his healing powers; with a reply from Tiberius declaring that "Pilate has officially informed us of the miracles of Jesus." With

respect to the other letters testimonial, it is recorded: "Abgar had not yet received answers to these letters when he died, having reigned thirty-eight years." (*Ibid.* pp. 657–741, 706.)

These crass episcopal forgeries were welcomed into the Church, and for fifteen centuries have gone unrebuked by Pope or Church. Even since the Reformation so strong was the belief in the Abgar-Jesus forgeries, that notable prelates in England, including Archbishop Cave, have "strenuously contended for their admission into the canon of Scripture. . . . The Reverend Jeremiah Jones observes, that common people in England have this Epistle in their houses, in many places, fixed in a frame, with the picture of Christ before it; and that they generally, with much honesty and devotion, regard it as the word of God, and the genuine Epistle of Christ." (Quoted in editorial note to the Epistles, in *The Lost Books of the Bible,* p. 62.) To such state of superstitious credulity does the Church with its pious impostures prostitute the minds of its ignorant and credulous votaries. The portrait of Jesus, referred to above, is said, in other versions of the Letter, to have been sent by Jesus to the King; this portrait is now displayed at *both* Rome and Genoa. (*NIE.* i, 38.)

OTHER FORGERIES FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

The pious fancy of the Fathers forged another official Letter, in the name of what *CE.* calls "a fictitious person," one Lentulus, pretended predecessor of Pilate as governor of Judæa, to the Roman Senate, giving a description of the personal appearance of Jesus Christ, and closing with the words, "He is the most beautiful of the sons of men." This letter, says *CE.* "was certainly apocryphal"; it was first printed in the *Life of Christ,* by Ludolph the Cartusian; though it is thought to be traceable to the time of Diocletian. (*CE.* ix, 154.) This notion of the personal beauty of Jesus is not shared by the "tradition" of the Fathers; for Jesus Christ is declared by Cyril of Alexandria to have been "the ugliest of the sons of men"; a tradition also declared by Fathers Justin Martyr and Tertullian; to offset which evil notion there was forged "a beautiful Letter, purporting to have been written by Lentulus to the Roman Senate." (*Ib.* vi, 235.) But St. Augustine, says *CE.*, "mentions that in his time there was

no authentic portrait of Christ, and that the type of features was still undetermined, so that we have absolutely no knowledge of His appearance." (*De Trinitate, lib.* vii, ch. 4, 5; *CE.* vi, 211, n.)

This, however, is contrary to the venerated Church fable and artistic forgery current under the title of "St. Veronica's Veil," based on the tale in Luke (xxvii, 27) of the woman of Jerusalem who offered to Jesus a linen cloth to wipe his face as he was carrying his cross towards Calvary. On wiping his sweating face, the supposed authentic likeness of the features of the Christ was miraculously impressed upon the cloth. The lucky lady "went to Rome, bringing with her this image of Christ, which was long exposed to public veneration. To her are likewise traced several other relics of the Blessed Virgin venerated in several Churches of the West. To distinguish at Rome the oldest and best known of these images it was called *vera icon* (true image), which ordinary language soon made *veronica* . . . By degrees *popular imagination* mistook this word for the name of a person" (*CE.* xv, 362),—and, Lo! *Saint Veronica* emerges from the canonized Saint-mill of Holy Church. Here we plainly see myth-in-the-making; and may appreciate the moral splendor as well as crafty thriftiness of the Church of God which thus supplies its Faithful ready-made with one of the most cherished female Saints of the Calendar,—a confessed myth and forgery. His Holiness especially displayed and vouched for this fake on March 19, 1930, when he preached his crusade against Russia. But the Church also, in the Roman Martyrology, credits this holy icon to Milan, so as to fool many other Faithful. (*Ib.* p. 363.) This mythical female Saint "has also been confounded with a pious woman who, according to [Bishop] Gregory of Tours, brought to the neighboring town of Bazas some drops of the blood of John the Baptist, at whose beheading she was present," and *CE.* doesn't even wink. (*Ib.*)

JOSEPHUS FORGEDLY TESTIFIES OF JESUS

So many confessed Christian forgeries in Pagan and Christian names having been wrought to testify to Jesus Christ, it was, "one naturally expects," says *CE.*, that a Jewish "writer so well informed as Josephus" must know and tell about Jesus; "one naturally expects,

therefore, a notice about Jesus Christ in Josephus." And with pride it pursues: "Antiquities, VIII, iii, 3, *seems* to satisfy this expectation." It proceeds to quote the passage, which differeth only as one translation naturally differs from another, from that in the Whitson translation; so I follow *CE.* In Chapter iii Josephus treats of "Sedition of the Jews against Pontius Pilate"; in section 1 he relates the cause and the suppression of the mutiny, the ensigns of the army displaying the idolatrous Roman Eagle, brought into the Holy City; in section 2 he tells of the action of Pilate in bringing "a current of water to Jerusalem, and did it with the sacred money," thus again arousing a clash with the fanatics; "there were great numbers of them slain by this means." Passing for the moment the notorious section 3, Josephus the Jew begins section 4: "About the same time, also, *another sad calamity* put the Jews in disorder," which he proceeds to relate, ending the long chapter. Note that these section numbers were not put in by Josephus, but are modern editor's devices to facilitate citation, like the chapters and verses in the Bible. And now for the much-debated section, sandwiched, in a whole chapter on "Seditions of the Jews," between the accounts of two massacres of his countrymen and "another sad calamity"; and thus we read—note the *parentheses* of *CE.* (viii, 376):—

"About this time," quotes *CE.*, "appeared Jesus, a wise man (if indeed it is right to call Him a man; for He was a worker of astonishing deeds, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with joy), and He drew to Himself many Jews (and many also of the Greeks. This was the Christ). And when Pilate, at the denunciation of those that are foremost among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those who had first loved Him did not abandon Him. (For He appeared to them alive on the third day, the holy prophets having foretold this and countless other marvels about Him.) The tribe of Christians named after Him did not cease to this day." (sec. 3.)

About this time, *also* "another sad calamity [?] put the Jews into disorder," (sec. 4) continues Josephus. *CE.* devotes over three long columns to the task of trying to prove that this section 3, or at least "the portions *not in parentheses*,"—is genuine, and was written, sometime before his death in 94 A. D., by the Jewish Pharisee, Josephus. "A testimony so important," well says *CE.*, "could not escape the critics,"—and it has not. We cannot follow the lengthy and labored arguments; the simple reading of the section, in its bizarre context,

and a moment's reflection, condemn it as a pious Christian forgery. If the Pharisee Josephus wrote that paragraph, he must have believed that Jesus was the Prophesied Messiah of his people—"*This was the Christ,*" Josephus is made to aver; he must then needs have been of "the tribe of Christians named after Him." But whatever Josephus may have said about Jesus is, indeed, *not* "a testimony so important" —when we remember what he did aver that he saw with his own eyes: the pillar of salt into which Mrs. Lot was turned; and Eleazar the magician drawing the devil by a ring and Solomonic incantations, through the nose of one possessed, before Vespasian and all his army. If Josephus had written that he knew Jesus the Christ personally, and had personally seen him ascend into heaven through the roof of the room in Jerusalem (Mk. xvi, 19, 20), *or* from the open countryside by Bethany (Lk. xxiv, 50, 51), *or* "on the mount called Olivet" (Acts i, 9, 12),—we should remember that pillar of salt and that devil-doctor, and smile.

But, when and how did this famous passage get into *The Antiquities of the Jews?* it is pertinent to ask. The first mention ever made of this passage, and its text, are in the Church History of that "very dishonest writer," Bishop Eusebius, in the fourth century,—he who forged the Letters between Abgar and Jesus, falsely declaring that he had found the original documents in the official archives, whence he had copied and translated them into his Ecclesiastical History. *CE.* admits, and I have the *Contra Celsum* here before me,—that "the above cited passage *was not known to Origen and the earlier patristic writers,*"—though they copied from Josephus the forged tale of the Letter of Aristeas about the translating of the Septuagint; and "its very place in the Josephan text is uncertain, since Eusebius (Hist. Eccl., II, vi) must have *found* it before the notices concerning Pilate, while it now stands *after* them" (*HE.* I, ii, p. 63); and it makes the curious argument, which implies a confession: "But the spuriousness of the disputed Josephan passage does not imply the historian's ignorance of the facts connected with Jesus Christ"! For a wonder, that "a writer so well informed as Josephus" should not, perhaps, know by hearsay, sixty years after Jesus Christ, some of the remarkable things circulated about him in current country-side gossip—(if, indeed, it were then current). But the fact is, that with the exception of this

one incongruous forged passage, section 3, the wonder-mongering Josephus makes not the slightest mention of his wonder-working fellow-countryman, Jesus the Christ,—though some score of other Joshuas, or Jesuses, are recorded by him, nor does he mention any of his transcendent wonders. But, as *CE.* and I were saying, none of the Fathers, before Eusebius (about 324), knew or could find a word in the works of Josephus, of this momentous "testimony to Jesus," over a century after Origen. That it *did not exist in the time of Origen* is explicit by his own words; he cites the supposed references by Josephus to John the Baptist and to James, and expressly says that Josephus *ought to have spoken of Jesus* instead of James; though Origen does not correctly describe the reference to James; and the James passage, if not that also about John, has a suspicious savor of interpolation.

For a clear understanding of this, I will quote the passage of Origen in his work against Celsus; it completely refutes the claim that Josephus wrote the disputed and forged section 3. Origen says:

"I would like to say to Celsus, who represents the Jew accepting John somehow as a Baptist, who baptized Jesus, that the existence of John the Baptist, baptizing for the remission of sins, is related by one who lived no great time after John and Jesus. For in the 18th book of his *Antiquities of the Jews,* Josephus bears witness to John as having been a Baptist, and as promising purification to those who underwent the rite. Now this writer, although *not believing in Jesus as the Christ,* in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple [said that it was 'to avenge James the Just'], whereas he *ought to have said* that the conspiracy against Jesus was the cause of these calamities befalling the people, since they put to death Christ, who was a prophet, says nevertheless—being, although against his will, not far from the truth—that these disasters happened to the Jews as a punishment for the death of James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus (called Christ),—the Jews having put him to death, although he was a man most distinguished for his justice." (Origen, *Contra Celsum,* I, xlvii; *ANF.* iv, 416.)

Josephus is thus quoted as bearing witness to John the Baptist, *not* as the Heaven-sent "forerunner" of the Christ, but simply as a Jewish religious teacher and baptizer on his own account; and not a word by Josephus about the Christ, in whom it is admitted that he did not believe as such, nor even mentions as the most illustrious of

those baptized by John, to the wondrous accompaniment of a voice from Heaven and the Holy Ghost in dove-like descent upon his head as he came up from the water. But Origen, in his effort to get some Christian testimony from him, misquotes Josephus and makes him say that John was baptizing "for the remission of sins," whereas Josephus expressly says that the efficacy of John's baptism was *not* for remission of sin but for the purification of the body, as any washing would be. To vindicate Josephus against Origen, the former's words are quoted. Josephus recounts the defeat of Herod by Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea; and goes on to say:—

"Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another, and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, *not* in order to the putting away of some sins, but for the purification of the body: supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when many others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was *there* put to death." (Josephus, *Antiq. Jews,* Bk. XVIII, v, 2.)

Beginning in section 4 of the same Book, and at length in various chapters, Josephus goes into details regarding Salome; but never a word of the famous dance-act and of the head of John the Baptist being brought in on a charger to gratify her murderous whim; the historical reason for the murder of John was political, not amorous or jealous, as related by Gospel-truth.

Father Origen again falls into error in citing Josephus, this time in the dubious passage where Josephus, who does not believe in the Christ, yet gives him that title in speaking of the death of James. With typical clerical bent Father Origen imputes the fall of Jerusalem and

the destruction of the temple to the sin of the Jews in crucifying the Christ; and says that Josephus, in seeking the cause of the disasters which befell the Holy City and people, attributes them to the killing of the Christ's brother. The Holy City and temple were destroyed in 70 A. D., which was well after the time of the supposititious James, as his demise is recorded in the suspected passage of Josephus. He relates the death of Festus, which was in 62 A. D., the appointment by Nero of Albinus as his successor, and the murder of James at the instigation of the high priest Ananus, before Albinus can arrive. This sentence is to be read in the text of Josephus:

"Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he (Ananus) assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formulated an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned." (Jos., *Antiq. Jews,* Bk. XX, ix, 1.)

Bishop Eusebius cannot pass over this chance to turn another Jewish testimony for his Christ; he says that "The wiser part of the Jews were of the opinion that this—(the killing of James)—was the cause of the immediate siege of Jerusalem . . . Josephus also has not hesitated to superadd his testimony in his works. 'These things,' he says, 'happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was the brother of him that is called Christ, and whom the Jews had slain, notwithstanding his preëminent justice.'" (Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* Bk. II, ch. 23.)

The reader may judge of the integrity of these pretended Jewish testimonies to the Baptist and to the brother of the Christ, both suspicious *per se,* and both falsely cited by Father Origen, who in all this could not find the famous section 3, first found a century later by Bishop Eusebius; and which Origen makes it positive Josephus had not written and could not have written. Is it a violent suspicion, and uncharitable, to suggest that the holy Bishop who forged the Letter of his Christ, and lied about finding it in the Edessa archives, really "found," in the sense of *invented,* or forged, the Josephus passages first heard of in his Church History?

But Bishop Eusebius, with a sort of "stop thief" forethought,

himself imputes forgery to those who would question or discredit his own pious inventions, while with unctuous fervor of pretended truth he appeals to the wonderful "testimonies of Josephus," which he has just fabricated. After quoting and misquoting Josephus with respect to John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, he thus solemnly vouches for their false witness: "When such testimony as this is transmitted to us by an historian who sprung from the Hebrews themselves, both respecting John the Baptist and our Saviour, what subterfuge can be left, to prevent those from being convicted destitute of all shame, who have forged the acts against them?" (Eusebius, *HE.* I, xi.) The Bishop justly pronounces his own condemnation. This, says Gibbon, "is an example of no vulgar forgery." (Chap. xvi.) In view of the convicting circumstances, and of his notoriously bad record, it is not uncharitable to impute this Josephus forgery to Bishop Eusebius.

THE OWL-ANGEL FORGERY

Another story of Pagan superstition related by Josephus, and twisted by the Christian invention of Bishop Eusebius and the sacred writers of *Acts* into inspired "history" and truth of God, is the celebrated angel-owl passage relating to the tragic death of the King, Herod Agrippa. Josephus tells that Herod went to Cæsarea to attend a celebration in honor of Cæsar; that as Herod entered the stadium, clad in a robe of silver tissue, the rays of the sun shone upon it resplendently, making him look like a supernatural being; whereupon the crowd cried out hailing him as more than mortal, as a god; but his mortality was quickly made evident by his sudden illness and death. It may be explained that the word "angel" (Greek, *angelos*) means simply "messenger" or herald. Thus proceeds Josephus:

"But as he [Herod] presently afterward looked up, he saw an *owl* sitting upon a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was a messenger [Gr. *angelos*] of ill-tidings." Herod was shortly seized with "severe pains in his belly," and died after five days of suffering." (Jos. *Antiq. Jews,* XIX, viii, 2.)

This was too Paganish and prosaic for the pious Christian fancy of Bishop Eusebius; so while he was forging the "Jesus passage," he proceeded to give Christian embellishment for edification to the "owl"

story, with its use of the word "angelos." So he quotes in full the narration of Josephus, under the chapter heading "Herod Agrippa persecuting the Apostles, immediately experienced divine Judgment." He first relates the "martyrdom of James" by Herod, and the imprisonment of Peter, as recorded in Acts, and proceeds: "The consequences, however, of the king's attempts against the apostles, were not long deferred, but the avenging minister of divine justice soon overtook him. . . . As it is also recorded in the book of Acts, he proceeded to Cæsarea, and there on a noted festival, being clad in a splendid and royal dress, he harangued the people. . . . The whole people applauding him for his harangue, as it were the voice of a god, and not of a man, the Scriptures relate, 'that the angel of the Lord immediately smote him, and being consumed by worms, he gave up the ghost.' It is wonderful to observe, likewise, in this singular event, the *coincidence* of the history given by Josephus, with that of the sacred Scriptures. In this he [Josephus] plainly *adds his testimony to the truth,* in the nineteenth book of his Antiquities, where *he relates* the miracles in the following words: [here quoting Josephus in full, until he reaches the owl-story, when he thus falsifies]: —'After a little while, raising himself, he saw *an angel* [*angelos*] hanging over his head upon a rope, and this he knew immediately to be an omen of evil'! Thus far Josephus: in which statement, as in others, I can but admire his agreement with the divine Scriptures"! (Eusebius, *HE.* II, x.) An angel hanging on a rope over one's head might well have been taken by a superstitious person as ominous of something—maybe of a hung angel. This pious story, with the *owl* piously metamorphosed into an *angel,* was apparently cribbed from Josephus also by the writer of Acts, or maybe "interpolated" into it by the fanciful Bishop. There we find this Pagan-Jewish anecdote retold by divine inspiration, thus embellished over Josephus and Eusebius: "And immediately the angel of the Lord [Gr. *angelos Kuriou*] smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost"! (Acts xii, 20–23.) Note the almost identical words, except for the progressive embellishments: Josephus' owl thus became first an angel of evil omen, then the avenging minister of the wrath of God, aided by devouring worms to give true Christian zest and spite to the simple Pagan superstition. Herod

probably died from acute indigestion caused by the excesses of the festivities, or from an attack of peritonitis or appendicitis. Profane history of the event does not chronicle the devouring, avenging worms of God.

The forgery of pious documents of every imaginable character was among the most constant and zealous activities of the holy propagandists of the Christian Faith, from the beginning to the critical era when forgeries were no longer possible or profitable. A fitting close to this review is the following omnibus confession—the Churches cheating each other by forgeries:

"Indeed, in later times, we hear of recovered autographs of Apostolic writings in the controversies about the Apostolic origin of some Churches or about claims for metropolitan dignity. So the autograph of the Gospel of St. Matthew was said to have been found in Cyprus. . . . Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. vii, 19) relates that in his time the seat of St. James was as yet extant in Jerusalem. Of old pictures of Apostles, see Eusebius, ibid, vii, 18. Whether or not even the oldest of these statements are historically true remains still a mooted question. We regard it as useless to record what may be found on these topics in *the vast amount of matter* that makes up the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles and other legendary documents." (*CE.* i, 635.)

Among some of these not already mentioned are found "The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, The Canons of Pseudo-Hippolytus, The Egyptian Church Ordinance." (*CE.* i, 636.) Also: "In the last years of the fifth century a famous document *attributed* to Popes Gelasius and Hormisdas adds . . . a list of books disapproved, the works of heretics, and *forged Scriptural documents.*" (*CE.* vi, 4.) A glance at the Index-volume of *CE.* reveals the numerous forged works attributed to many of the Fathers of the early Church, listed under the word *Pseudo,* or false, which word is to be understood as prefixed to each of the following names: *Pseudo*-Alquin, Ambrosius, Antoninus, Areopagite, Athanasius, Augustine, Barnabas, Callisthenes, Chrysostom, Clement, Epiphanius, Gelasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Hegesippus, Hippolytus, Ignatius, Isidore, Jonathan, Justin, Matthew, Prochorus, Tertullian, Zacharius. The pious ignorant "Christians, who for the most part are untrained and illiterate persons," as shown in the

Octavius of Minucius Felix (v, xi), and the whole Church, were gulled by these frauds for a thousand years.

Before looking into the forgery of the New Testament Books, we shall first draw, from their own words, cameo pen-sketches of those great men of God and of Holy Church, who under the fond name of Fathers, but with the minds and devious ways of little children, forged the sacred documents of the Faith, and by their pious labors of fraud and forgery founded what is credulously called the Church of Christ and the Most Holy Christian Faith.

CHAPTER IV

THE SAINTLY "FATHERS" OF THE FAITH

"The greater Saint, the greater Liar." *Diegesis.*

"The principal historians of the patristic period cannot always be completely trusted." (*CE.* vi, 14.)

EMBRACED WITHIN *CE.'s* confession of patristic untrustworthiness and perversion of truth is every "Father" and Founder of the Church of Christ of the first three centuries of the fabrication of the new Faith,—as by their own words will now be demonstrated. Yet upon these self-same not-to-be-trusted fabulists and forgers do the truth and validity of the Christ and the Christian religion solely and altogether depend. They destroy it.

The Fathers of our country, framers of our Constitution and form of government, were men of personal honor and of public probity; the most of them were Infidels. The "Fathers" and founders of the Christian religion and Church of Christ were, all of them, ex-Pagan charlatans—"we who formerly used magical arts," as Father Justin Martyr admits (I *Apology*, xiv), who took up the new Christian superstition and continued to ply the same old magical arts under a new veneer, upon the ignorant and superstitious pagans and near-pagans, as the ensuing pages will demonstrate. The Fathers will show themselves to be wholly destitute of common sense of opinion and of common honesty of statement, credulous and mendacious to the *n*-th degree.

It is of capital importance to an intelligent and adequate understanding of the Christian religion, of which these Fathers were the originators and propagandists, to see their work in the making, and to know the mental and moral limitations and obliquities of these fatuous, fabling, forging Fathers of the Church. We shall see them to be grotesquely credulous of every fable, many of which themselves fabricated; reckless of truth to the highest degree; fluent and unscrupulous

"traditions"] of the second century, rather than an example of historical narrative." (*CE.* vii, 341.)

Tradition is popular stories and hand-me-down reports or gossip current in the community or passing current among any particular class of people; it is of the same stuff as legend is made of. One pious Father or propagator of the Faith would aver some wonder-tale which would attract credulous interest; the next, in repeating it, invariably embroiders it with new fancies, and so it grows like a snowball of fables. We have seen the example of the garnishments of the Fathers to the forged Aristeas-tale regarding the Septuagint; we shall see the Fatherly "traditions" suddenly crop up a century or two after some alleged event, embroider and expand—and contradict themselves from Father to Father in the telling, with respect to every single instance: Gospel-tales, forged "apocrypha" narratives, false foundations of churches, bishops, popes, apostolic successions. Thus the Fathers inflated their originally fictitious "traditions" of this and that, and on such bases the New Testament and the Church of Christ arose. Of course, the credibility of any "tradition" or alleged fact depends wholly on the credit of the first narrator of it; to all later repeaters it is purely *hearsay*, and gains no further credit from the number of those repeating the original tale. If a thing is a lie when first told, repetition *ad infinitum* cannot make it into a truth.

In a note to one instance of patristic tradition recorded in the bulky collection, the editors of the *ANF.*, to which we are indebted for most of what follows regarding these fatuous Fathers, make this sententious comment: "Hearsay at second-hand, and handed about among many, amounts to *nothing* as evidence." And this is the comment of Father Bishop Eusebius, the first Church historian, on the "traditions" of good Father Bishop Papias, first of the sub-Apostolic Fathers: "These sayings [of Jesus Christ and apostles] consisted of a number of strange parables, and doctrines of our Saviour, which *the authority of so venerable a person*, who had lived with the apostles, *imposed on the Church as genuine*." (*Hist. Eccles.* Bk. III, ch. 39.) But this is simply another fictitious "tradition," that Papias "lived with the apostles," for he did not, as his own words and *CE.* will disclose when we come to sketch that pious fabulist of a Father. Such are

patristic and ecclesiastical "traditions," of which sufficient examples are yet to be noticed.

THE TWELVE "TRADITIONAL" APOSTLES

There were Twelve Tribes of Israel; and Moses, coming down from Sinai, appointed twelve young men "according to the twelve tribes of Israel" to sacrifice at the twelve phallic pillars which he set up to celebrate the giving of the Law. (Ex. xxiv, 4–5.) So "tradition" has it that Jesus appointed Twelve Apostles: "The number twelve was symbolical, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel" (*EB.* i, 264); but the whole story is fictitious, says *EB.* (iii, 2987), with the soundest Scriptural basis for its conclusion. As this—and many other fictional features of the Christ-biographies—are fully examined in my *Is It God's Word?* (Chaps. XIII–XIV), I must refer to it for the confused "traditions" of the Twelve, for the purpose of showing their wholly fictitious character.

After the same "symbolical" fashion the legendary "Seventy Elders of Israel," commanded by Yahveh and chosen by Moses (Num. xi, 16, 24), had their counterpart in the equally legendary "Seventy Disciples, whom also the Lord appointed" (Luke x, 1),—and who furnished so many zealous missionaries and early church-founders, as their "records" pretend, and so many of which are by *CE.* declared to be fraudulent and forged. Bear in mind that the "Gospel" records, as we shall see, are anonymous forgeries of a century and more after the "traditional" events recorded; and the unreliable nature of "tradition" is further illustrated.

The probability if not assurance will appear the stronger, as we proceed with the Fathers and with the "sacred writings," that the Holy Twelve had no existence in the flesh, but their "cue" being taken from the Old Testament legends, they were mere names—*dramatis personæ* —masks of the play,—of "tradition," such as Shakespeare and all playwrights and fiction-writers create for the actors of their plays and works of admitted fiction.

A very curious and challenging admission is made by *CE.* in speaking of the noted forgeries, long regarded as inspired, of the "Pseudo-

Dionysius the Areopagite," who "clave unto Paul" after his Mar's Hill harangue (Acts xvii, 34), and in whose name many precious forgeries—"a series of famous writings" (*CE.* v, 13)—were forged by pious Christians "at the very earliest in the latter half of the fifth century," and which were "of highest and universally acknowledged authority, both in the Western and in the Eastern Church, lasting until the beginning of the fifteenth century," followed by a "period of sharp conflict waged about their authenticity, begun by Laurentius Valla, and closing only within recent years." (*CE.* v, 15.) "Those writings," says *CE.*—with more far-reaching suggestion than intended,—"*with intent to deceive*, weave into their narrative certain *fictitious personages, such as Peter, James, John, Timothy, Carpus, and others.*" (*CE.* vii, 345.) If these great Apostles and "pillars of the Faith" are "fictitious personages" in the long-revered but now admitted forgeries of Pseudo-Dionysius, by what token may they be any the less *fictitious personages* in the hundreds of other equally forged Christian writings which we shall notice,—as also in the to-be-demonstrated forgeries of Gospels, Acts and Epistles, in which the identical personages, or *dramatis personæ*, play their imaginary and self-contradictory rôles, as we shall promptly see? For fifteen hundred years, and until "only within recent years," were the Dionysian forgeries tenaciously proclaimed as genuine by the Holy-Ghost-guided Church; may it not have been equally mis-guided as to the "authenticity" of its Gospels and other "sacred writings"? If, in the venerated "*pseudo-Areopagite*," the sainted Peter, Paul, John, *et als.*, are admittedly "*fictitious personages*," how do they acquire the flesh and blood of *actual persons* in Gospels and Epistles? We shall see.

I. *The Apostles*

Two of them, the principal, Peter and John, are described to be "*anthropoi agrammatoi kai idiotai*—unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv, 13); all Twelve were of the same type and well matched. They were variously picked up from among the humblest and most superstitious of the Galilee peasants, fishermen and laborers, "called" personally, we are told, by the Son of God, the proclaimed King-to-be of the Jews, to be his counsellors and associates in the establishment of

his earthly and heavenly Kingdoms—of Jews. As for the King-to-be and his prospective Court, a saddening and repellent portraiture is sketched in the inspired Biographies: though it is true, "The chronology of the birth of Christ and the subsequent Biblical events is most uncertain." (*CE.* vii, 419.) His parents and family regarded him as insane and sought to restrain him by force. (Mark iii, 21; cf. John x, 20.) He and his Apostle-band toured Palestine with a retinue of barefoot and unwashed peasant men and women, shocking polite people by their habits of not washing even their hands to eat when invited as guests, and by the violence of their language. These traits ran in his peasant family and relatives. His cousin, known as John the Baptist, was a desert dervish, unwashed and unshorn, who wore a leather loin-strap for clothes and whose regular diet was wild bumble-bee honey and raw grasshoppers. His own brother James was as unkempt and filthy as any Saint in the calendar; of him Bishop Eusebius records: "James, the brother of the Lord, . . . a razor never came upon his head, he never anointed with oil, and *never used a bath*"! (*HE.* II, 23.) With the Master at their head, the Troupe wandered up and down the little land, proclaiming the immediate end of the world, playing havoc with the legions of devils who infested the peasantry, and preaching Hell and Damnation for all who would not heed their fanatical preachments.

APOSTOLIC GREED AND STRIFE

As for the Twelve, the hope of great reward was the inspiredly recorded motive of these peasants who left their petty crafts for hope of greater gain by following the lowly King-to-be. The zeal and greed for personal aggrandizement of the Chosen Twelve is constantly revealed throughout the inspired record. Hardly had the Holy Twelve gotten organized and into action, when the cunning and crafty Peter, spokesman for the craft, boldly came forward and advanced the itching palm: "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; *what shall we have therefore?*" (Matt. xix, 27.) And the Master came back splendidly with the Promise: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the

twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix, 28). But even these brilliant future rewards could not satisfy the greed of the Holy Ones, and led not to gratitude, but to greater greed and strife.

The Mother of James and John, probably inspired by them, and zealous for their greater glory, came secretly with her two sons, to Jesus, "worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him" (Matt. xx, 20); and when Jesus asked her what it was, "she saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy Kingdom." (v. 21.) But Mark contradicts the assurance of Matthew that it was Mrs. Zebedee who came and made the request, and avers that "James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire," and stated their own modest demand for preferment. (Mark x, 35–37.) But, in either contradictory event, both agree that "when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." (Matt. xxix, 24; Mark x, 41.)

Not during the whole one- or three-years of association with their Master, did these holy Apostles abate their greed and strife. Several times are recorded disputes among them as to "who should be greatest among them" (Matt. xviii, 1; Mark ix, 33–34; Luke ix, 46)—here again the "harmony of the Gospels" assuring the constant inharmony of the Apostles. And even at the Last Supper, when Jesus had announced that one of them would that night betray him to death, "there was also strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." (Luke xxii, 24.) And great was the disgust of the Master at his miserable Apostles, and especially at the craven and crafty Peter. Jesus had spurned him with blasting scorn, "and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense to me" (Matt. xvi, 23); and again the Gospels are in Harmony (Mt. xvi, 23; Mk. viii, 33). Such are the Holy Apostles of Jesus Christ, said to be painted by some of themselves through inspiration. This "Satan" Peter, later constituted "Saint" Peter, shall again deserve our attention.

II. *The Apostolic Fathers*

Under this rubric *CE.* lists, as those who were "converted with the apostles," and, after them, were the first propagandists of the

Truth, the Catholic Saints Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas, and Hermas; they fill up the first half of the second century of the era. The "traditions" preserved of these saintly Fathers of the Church are very scanty and dubious; but from what exists they were all within the apostolic description of Peter and John, "ignorant and unlearned men," and like Bishop Papias, as described by Bishop Eusebius, "men of very small minds, if we may judge from their own words," of which we shall now read for ourselves. It will be noted that all these Fathers, like all the sub-apostolic Fathers for the first two centuries and more, were ex-Pagans, and (with the alleged exception of "Pope" Clement), were Greeks of scattered parts of the Empire, who wrote and taught in Greek, and with the very questionable exception of Clement, had nothing to do with "the Church which sojourns at Rome." Each was the Bishop and head of his own local, and independent, Church; and never once does one of them (except Clement of Rome, in a forged Epistle), speak of or mention the Church of Rome, or more than barely mention Peter (and only as *one* of the Apostles), nor mention or quote a single book of the New Testament,—though they are profuse in quoting the Old Testament books, canonical and apocryphal, the Pagan gods, and the Sibylline oracles, as inspired testimonies of Jesus Christ. The significance of all this will appear.

1. CLEMENT OF ROME (about 30–96 A. D.). He is alleged to be the first, second, third, or fourth, Bishop, or Pope, of Rome (*CE.* iv, 13); and to be the author of two Epistles to the Corinthians, besides other bulky and important forgeries, thus confessed and catalogued by *CE:*

"Many writings have been falsely attributed to Pope St. Clement: (1) The 'Second Clementine Epistle to the Corinthians.' Many critics have believed them genuine [they having been read in the Churches]. . . . But it is now admitted on all hands that they cannot be by the same author as the genuine [?] Epistle to the Corinthians. . . . (2) Two 'Epistles to Virgins.' (3) At the head of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals stand five letters attributed to St. Clement. (4) Ascribed to Clement are the 'Apostolic Constitutions,' 'Apostolic Canons,' and the 'Testament of our Lord.' (5) The 'Clementines' or 'Pseudo-Clementines,' including the *Recognitions* and *Homilies,*" hereafter to be noticed. (*CE.* iv, 14–15; cf. 17, 39.)

The second of these alleged Epistles of Clement to the Corinthians

is thus admittedly a forgery, together with everything else in his name but the alleged First Epistle. The case for this First Epistle is little if any better; but as it is the very flimsy basis of one of the proudest claims of Holy Church—though suppressed as "proof" of another claim which it disproves,—it is, as it were, plucked as a brand from the burning of all the other Clementine forgeries, and placed at the head of all the writings of the Fathers. Of this I Clement *EB.* says: "The author is *certainly not Clement of Rome,* whatever may be our judgment as to whether or not Clement was a bishop, a martyr, a disciple of the apostles. The martyrdom, set forth in *untrustworthy Acts,* has for its sole foundation the identification of Clement of Rome with Flavius Clement the consul, who was executed by command of Domitian,"—A. D. 81–96. (*EB.* iii, 3486.) This First Epistle is supposed to have been written about the year 96–98, by Clement, friend and coworker of Paul, according to the late "tradition" first set in motion by Dionysius, A. D. 170. But "This Clement," says *CE.*, after citing the Fathers, "was probably a Philippian." (*CE.* iv, 13.) "Who the Clement was to whom the writings were ascribed, cannot with absolute certainty be determined." (*ANF.* i, 2.)

It is notable that the pretendedly genuine "First Epistle" does not contain or mention the name of any one as its author, nor name Clement; its address is simply: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." There is only one MS. of it in existence, a translation into Latin from the original Greek. This is the celebrated MS. of "Holy Scripture" known as Codex A, which was discovered and presented to Charles I of England by Cyril of Alexandria, in 1628; the Fathers cited both I and II Clement as Scripture. On this MS., at the end of I Clement, is written, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians": a subscription which proves itself a forgery and that it was not written by Clement, who could not know that a later forger would write a "Second Clement," so as to give him occasion to call his own the First. (*ANF.* viii, 55–56.)

By whomever this "First Epistle" was written, by Father, Bishop, or Pope of Rome, his zeal and his intelligence are demonstrated by his argument, in Chapter xxv, of the truth of the Resurrection; in proof of which he makes this powerful and faith-compelling plea:

"Let us consider that wonderful sign [of the resurrection] which takes place in Eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a phoenix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the City called Heliopolis. And, in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the 500th year was completed." (*ANF.* i, p. 12. Note: "This fable respecting the phoenix is mentioned by Herodotus (ii, 73) and by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* x, 2), and is used as above by Tertullian (*De Resurr.*, sec. 13), and by others of the Fathers." *CE.* iv, 15.)

The occasion for the pretended writing of this Epistle, and the very high significance of it, will be noticed when we treat of the origin of the Church which sojourns at Rome.

2. IGNATIUS: Saint, Bishop of Antioch (born in Syria, c. 50—died rather latitudinously "between 98 and 117"). "More than one of the early ecclesiastical writers has given credence, though apparently without good reason, to the legend that Ignatius was the child whom the Saviour took up in his arms, as described in Mark, ix, 35." (*CE.* vii, 644.) "*If* we include St. Peter, Ignatius was the third Bishop of Antioch," (*CE.* vii, 644),—thus casting doubt on another and a most monumental but confused Church "tradition." He was the subject of very extensive forgeries; fifteen Epistles bear the name of Ignatius, including one to the Virgin Mary, and her reply; two to the apostle John, others to the Philippians, Tarsians, Antiocheans, Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrneans, and to Polycarp, besides a forged *Martyrium;* the clerical forgers were very active with the name of Saint Ignatius. Of these, eight Epistles and the *Martyrium* are confessedly forgeries; "they are by common consent *set aside as forgeries,* which were at various dates and *to serve special purposes,* put forth under the name of the celebrated Bishop of

Antioch" (*ANF.* i, 46; *CE.* vii, 645); though, says *CE.*, "*if* the *Martyrium* is genuine, this work has been greatly interpolated." As to the seven supposed by some to be genuine, "even the genuine epistles were *greatly interpolated to lend weight to the personal views* of its author. For this reason they are incapable of bearing witness to the original form" (*CE.* vii, 645); and even the authenticity of the "genuine seven" was warmly disputed for several centuries. The dubious best that *CE.* can say is: "Perhaps the *best evidence* for their authenticity is to be found in the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, which mentions each of them by name . . . *UNLESS*, indeed, that of Polycarp itself be regarded as interpolated or *FORGED*." (*Ib.* p. 646.)

As good proofs as may be that these "seven genuine" are late forgeries, are: of each one of them, as printed in the *ANF.*, there are "two recensions, a shorter and a longer," printed in parallel columns, thus demonstrating that the longer at least is "greatly interpolated"; the most significant being a reference to Peter and Paul, constituting the "interpolated" part of Chap. vii of the Epistle to the Romans, hereafter noticed. That as a whole they are late forgeries, is further proved by the fact, stated by Cardinal Newman, that "the whole system of Catholic doctrine may be discovered, at least in outline, not to say in parts filled up, in the course of his seven Epistles" (*CE.* vii, 646); this including the impossibilities—for that epoch—of the elaborated hierarchy of the Imperial Church as having been instituted by the humble Nazarene,—who was to "come again" and put an end to all earthly things within the generation; the infallibility of the Church, the supernatural virtue of virginity, and the *primacy of the See of Rome*,—at the supposed time of Ignatius, a little horde of nondescripts burrowing in the Catacombs of imperial Rome! Oh, Church of God: never a scrap of paper even touched by you but was a loathsome forgery to the glory of your fictitious God and Christ! So as Father Saint Ignatius did not write anything authentic, he escapes the self-condemnation of the other Apostolic Fathers. May his martyred remains rest in peace.

3. POLYCARP: (69–155). Saint, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr. Only one Epistle, addressed to the Philippians, remains of Polycarp, and of it *CE.* discusses the "serious question" of its genuineness, which

depends upon that of the Ignatian Epistles, and *vice versa*, above discussed; it says: "If the former were forgeries, the latter, which supports—it might almost be said presupposes—them, *must be a forgery* from the same hand." (*CE.* xii, 219.) Poor Church of God, cannot you produce something of your Saints that isn't a forgery?

But if Saint Polycarp did not write anything genuine, his Church of Smyrna did itself proud in doing honor to his pretended Martyrdom, in A. D. 154–5, or 165–6 (*Ib.*)—so exact is Church "tradition." In one of the earliest Encyclicals—(not issued by a Pope)—the wondrous tale is told. It is addressed: "The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic—[first use of term]—Church in every place"; and proceeds in glowing words to recount the virtues, capture, trial and condemnation to death by fire, of the holy St. Polycarp. Just before his capture, Polycarp dreamed that his pillow was afire; he exclaimed to those around, "prophetically, 'I am to be burned alive.' " The forged and fabling Epistle proceeds: "Now, as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, 'Be strong, and show thyself a man, O Polycarp.' No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice" (Ch. ix). Then the details of his trial before the magistrates, and the verbatim report of his prayer when led to his fate (xiv). Then (Chap. xv):

"When he had pronounced this *amen*, and so finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. And as the flame blazed forth in great fury, we, to whom it was given to witness it, beheld a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what then took place. For the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed as by a circle of fire the body of the martyr. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace. Moreover, we perceived such a sweet odor (coming from the pile), as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been smoking there. (Ch. xvi.) At length, when those wicked men perceived that *his body could not be consumed by the fire*, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, *there came forth a dove*, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished"! (*Letter of the Church at Smyrna, ANF.* i. 39–44; *CE.* xii, 221.)

Even this holy Encyclical, at least as to its appended date, is not without suspicion; for, "The possibility remains that the *subscription was tampered with* by a later hand. But 155 *must be* approximately correct." (*CE.* xii, 221.) Oh, for something saintly above suspicion!

4. BARNABAS: (no dates given): Saint, a Jew; styled an Apostle, and variously a Bishop, and wholly "traditional." "Though nothing is recorded of Barnabas for some years, he *evidently* acquired a high position in the Church"; for "a rather late tradition recorded by Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius—[over 200 years later]—says he was one of the Seventy Disciples; but Acts (iv, 36–37)" indicates the contrary. "Various traditions represent him as the first Bishop of Milan, as preaching at Alexandria and at Rome, whose fourth Bishop, St. Clement, he is said to have converted, and as having suffered martyrdom in Cyprus. The traditions are all late and *untrustworthy*. He is credited by Tertullian (*probably falsely*) with the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the so-called Epistle attributed to him." (*CE.* ii, 300, 301.) Saint Barnabas, or his clerical counterfeiter, had some queer notions of natural history. Expounding the reasons why Moses banned certain animals as "unclean" and unfit for "Kosher" food, the Saintly writer says: that Moses banned the hare, "Because the hare multiplies, year by year, the places of its conception; for as many years as it lives, so many it has"; and the hyena, "Wherefore? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male, and at another female"; and the weasel, "For this animal conceives by the mouth." (*Epist. Barnabas*, Ch. x; *ANF.* i, 143.) Perhaps from this, other holy Fathers derived the analogous idea, to save the rather imperiled virginity of "the proliferous but ever Virgin mother of God," Mary, that she "*per aurem concepit*—conceived through her ear"—as sung in the sacred Hymn of the Church:

> "Gaude Virgo, mater Christi,
> Quae per aurem concepisti,
> Gabriele nuntio."
> (Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, I, p. 212.)

Thus we have, in *CE.* (*supra*) several Fathers imputed as liars, and a suspicion suggested as to Paul's inspired Epistle to the Hebrews

(which is another forgery), and the admission of a forged Epistle of Saint Barnabas. Poor Church of Christ!

5. HERMAS: Saint, Martyr, seems to have missed being Bishop, "first or second century,"—though the Church Saint record is so confused that I cannot vouch whether this one is the reputed author of the forged Epistle of Barnabas. But "in the lists of the Seventy Apostles by the *Pseudo*-Doretheus and the *Pseudo*-Hippolytus [two more forgeries], Hermas figures as Bishop of Philippi. No one any longer supposes that he was the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the date of which is about 40 A. D., though from Origen onwards Church-writers have expressed this view, and accordingly have given that allegorical work a place among the writings of the apostolic Fathers." (*EB.* ii, 2021; cf. *CE.* vii, 268.) The latter says that this "work had great authority in ancient times and was ranked with Holy Scripture" and included as such in the MSS. of Holy Writ; but it is called "apocryphal and false,"—like everything else the Holy Church has ever had for "Scripture" or for self-aggrandizement. The pious author quotes the quaint forged *Eldad and Medad* as Scripture, and the Pagan Sibyls as inspired Oracles of God.

III. *The Sub-Apostolic Fathers*

6. PAPIAS: (about 70–155 A. D.); Bishop of Hieropolis, in Phrygia, of whose "life nothing is known" (*CE.* xi, 459); who, after the Apostles and contemporary with the early Presbyters, was the first of the sub-Apostolic Fathers. He was an ex-Pagan Greek, who flourished as a Christian Father and Bishop during the first half of the second Christian century; the dates of his birth and death are unknown. He is said to have written five Books entitled "Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord,"—that is, of the Old Testament "prophecies"; these are now lost, "except a few precious fragments" (*CE.* vi, 5), whether fortunately or otherwise may be judged from the scanty "precious fragments" preserved in quotations by some of the other Fathers. According to Bishop Eusebius (*HE.* iii, 39), quoted by *CE.* (xi, 549), "Papias was a man of very small mind, if we may judge by his own words";—though again he calls him "a man well skilled in all manner of learning, and well acquainted with the [O. T.] Scriptures."

(*HE.* iv, 36.) As examples, Eusebius cites "a wild and extraordinary legend about Judas Iscariot attributed to Papias," wherein he says of Judas: "his body having swollen to such extent that he could not pass where a chariot could pass easily, he was crushed by the chariot, so that his bowels gushed out." (*ANF.* i, 153.) This Papian "tradition" of course impeaches both of the other contradictory Scriptural traditions of Judas, towit, that "he went and hanged himself" (Matt. xxvii, 5), and Peter's alleged statement that "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out." (Acts i, 15–18.) Bishop Eusebius says that Bishop Papias states that "those who were raised to life by Christ lived on until the age of Trajan,"—Roman Emperor from 98–117 A. D. Father Papias falls into what would by the Orthodox be regarded as "some" error, in disbelieving and denying the early crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ—evidently not then a belief; for he assures us, on the authority of what "the disciples of the Lord used to say in the old days," that Jesus Christ lived to be an old man; and so evidently died in peace in the bosom of his family, as we shall see explicitly confessed by Bishop Irenæus. Father Papias relates the raising to life of the mother of Manaïmos; also the drinking of poison without harm by Justus Barsabas; which fables he supported by "strange parables of the Saviour and teachings of his, and other *mythical* matters," says Bishop Eusebius (quoted by *CE.*), "which the authority of so venerable a person, who had lived with the Apostles, imposed upon the Church as genuine." (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* Bk. III, ch. 39.) But Father Papias—this is important to remember—is either misunderstood or misrepresented, in his claim to have known the Apostles, or at least the Apostle John; for, says *CE.*, in harmony with *EB.* and other authorities: "It is admitted that he could not have known many Apostles. . . . Irenæus and Eusebius, who had the works of Papias before them, understood the *presbyters* not to be Apostles, but disciples of disciples of the Lord, or even disciples of disciples of the Apostles." (*CE.* xi, 458; see Euseb. *HE.* III, 39.) This fact Papias himself admits, that he got his "apostolic" lore at second and third hand: "If, then, any one who had attended on the elders came, I asked minutely after their sayings,—what Andrew or Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the Lord's disciples:

which things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I imagined that what was to be got from books was not so profitable to me as what came from the living and abiding voice." (Papias, *Frag.* 4; *ANF.* i, 153.)

One of the "wild and mythical matters" which good Father Papias relates of Jesus Christ, which is a first-rate measure of the degree of his claimed intimacy with John the Evangelist, and of the value of his pretended testimony to the "Gospels" of Matthew and Mark, to be later noticed, is the "curious prophecy of the miraculous vintage in the Millennium which he attributes to Jesus Christ," as described and quoted by *CE.* In this, Papias assures us, on the authority of his admirer Bishop Irenæus, that he "had immediately learned from the Evangelist St. John himself," that: "the Lord taught and said, That the days shall come in which vines shall spring up, each having 10,000 branches, and in each branch shall be 10,000 arms, and on each arm of a branch 10,000 tendrils, and on each tendril 10,000 bunches, and on each bunch 10,000 grapes, and each grape, on being pressed, shall yield five and twenty gallons of wine; and when any one of the Saints shall take hold of one of these bunches, another shall cry out, 'I am a better bunch, take me, and bless the Lord by me.'" The same infinitely pious twaddle of multiplication by 10,000 is continued by Father Papias with respect to grains of wheat, apples, fruits, flowers, and animals, precisely like the string of jingles in the nursery tale of *The House that Jack Built;* even Jesus got tired of such his own alleged inanities and concluded by saying: "And those things are *believable by all believers;* but the traitor Judas, not believing, asked him, 'But how shall these things that shall propagate thus be brought to an end by the Lord?' And the Lord answered him and said, 'Those who shall live in those times shall see.'" "This indicates," explains Bishop Irenæus, who devotes a whole chapter to the repetition and elaboration of this Christ-yarn as "proof" of the meaning of Jesus, that he would drink of the fruit of the vine with his disciples in his father's Kingdom,—"this indicates the large size and rich quality of the fruits." (*CE.* xi, 458; Iren. *Adv. Hær.* IV, xxxiii, 4; *ANF.* i, 564.) How far less wild a myth, one may wonder, is this prolific propagation than that fabled by this same John the Evangelist in his supposed "Revelation," wherein he saw in heaven the River of Life pro-

ceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, and "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the River, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii, 1, 2.) Verily, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise"! (Mt. xxi, 16.)

7. JUSTIN MARTYR: (c. 100–165): Saint, Martyr, a foremost Christian Apologist. A Gentile ex-Pagan of Samaria, turned Christian, and supposed to have suffered martyrdom in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, in whose name he forged a very preposterous rescript. His principal works, in Greek, are his two *Apologies*, the first addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, whose reply he also forged; the second to "the sacred Senate" of Rome; his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, and his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*. He describes himself and fellow Christian Fathers as "we who formerly used magical arts." (*I Apol.* ch. xiv.) The burden of his arguments is Pagan "analogies" of Christianity, the contents of many of his chapters being indicated by their captions, as "The Demons Imitate Christian Doctrine," and "Heathen Analogies to Christian Doctrine," in chapters xiv and xv of his *First Apology*, and elsewhere. His whole faith in Christ and in Christianity, he declares, is confirmed by these heathen precedents and analogies: "Be well assured, then, Trypho, that I am established in the knowledge of and faith in the Scriptures by those counterfeits which he who is called the Devil is said to have performed among the Greeks; just as some were wrought by the Magi in Egypt, and others by the false prophets in Elijah's days. For when they tell that Bacchus, son of Jupiter, was begotten by [Jupiter's] intercourse with Semele, and that he was the discoverer of the vine; and when they relate, that being torn in pieces, and having died, he rose again, and ascended to heaven; and when they introduce wine into his mysteries, do I not perceive that [the devil] has imitated the prophecy announced by the patriarch Jacob, and recorded by Moses? . . . And when he [the devil] brings forward Æsculapius as the raiser of the dead and healer of all diseases, may I not say in this matter likewise he has imitated the prophecies about Christ? . . . And when I hear that Perseus was begotten of a virgin, I understand that the deceiving serpent counterfeited this also." (*Dial. with Trypho*, ch. lxix; *ANF.* i, 233.)

Father Justin accepts the heathen gods as genuine divine beings, but says they are only wicked demons who lead men astray; and he says that these "evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves, both defiled women and corrupted boys." (*I Apol.* ch. v, ch. liv, *passim.*) The devils "having heard it proclaimed through the prophets that the Christ was to come, . . . they put forward many to be called the sons of Jupiter, under the impression that they would be able to produce in men the idea that the things which were said in regard to Christ were mere marvellous tales, like the things which were said by the poets. . . . The devils, accordingly, when they heard these prophetic words, said that Bacchus was the son of Jupiter, and gave out that he was the discoverer of the vine"; and so through many twaddling chapters, repeating the argument with respect to Bellerophon and his horse Pegasus, of Perseus, of Hercules, of Æsculapius, etc., as "analogies" prophetic of baptism, sacraments, the eucharist, resurrection, etc., etc. The *Pagan myths and miracles are true; therefore* like fables of the Christ are worthy of belief: "And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-born of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter. . . . But as we have said above, wicked devils perpetrated these things. . . . And if we assert that the Word of God was born in a peculiar manner, different from ordinary generation, let this, as said above, be no extraordinary thing to you, who say that Mercury is the angelic word [Logos] of God. . . . And if we even affirm that He was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus. And in what we say that he made whole the lame, the paralytic, and those born blind, we seem to say what is very similar to the deeds said to have been done by Æsculapius." (*I Apol.*, chs. xxi, xxii; *ANF.* i, 170; cf. *Add. ad Græc.* ch. lxix; *Ib.* 233.)

Father Justin also retails to the Emperor the old fable of Simon Magus and his magical miracles at Rome, and attributes it all to the work of the devils. For "the evil spirits, not being satisfied with saying, before Christ's appearance, that those who were said to be sons of Jupiter were born of him, but after he appeared, . . . and when they learned how He had been foretold by the prophets, . . . put forward

again other men, the Samaritans Simon and Menander, who did many mighty works by magic; . . . and so greatly astonished the sacred Senate and people of the Romans that he was considered a god, and honored with a statue; . . . which statue was erected in the river Tiber, between the two bridges, and bore this inscription in the language of Rome: '*Simoni Deo Sancto*—To Simon the holy God" (I *Apol.* chs. xxvi, lvi; *ANF.* i, 171, 182; cf. Iren. *Adv. Hær.* ch. xxiii; *ANF.* i, 347–8; Euseb. *HE.* II, 13.) We have seen this much embroidered "tradition" myth exploded, and the statue discovered and deciphered, it being a simple private pious monument to a Pagan god!

Father Justin in many chapters cites and appeals for Christian proofs to "The Testimony of the Sibyl," of Homer, of Sophocles, of Pythagoras, of Plato. (*Add. ad Græc.* chs. 18–20; *ANF.* i, 279–280.) Of the Sibyl, so often quoted: "And you may in part learn the right religion from the ancient Sibyl, who by some kind of potent inspiration teaches you, through her oracular predictions, truths which seem to be much akin to the teachings of the prophets. . . . Ye men of Greece, . . . do ye henceforth give heed to the words of the Sibyl, . . . predicting, as she does in a clear and patent manner, the advent of our Saviour Jesus Christ," quoting long verses of Christian-forged nonsense. (*Ib.* chs. 37–38; *ANF.* i, 288–289.)

8. IRENÆUS (120–c. 200) Saint, Martyr, Bishop of Lyons; ex-Pagan of Smyrna, who emigrated to Gaul and became Bishop; "information of his life is scarce, and [as usual] in some measure inexact. . . . Nothing is known of the date of his death, which *may* have occurred at the end of the second or beginning of the third century." (*CE.* vii, 130.) How then is it known that he was a Martyr? Of him Photius, ablest early critic in the Church, warns that in some of his works "the purity of truth, with respect to *ecclesiastical traditions*, is adulterated by his *false and spurious readings*" (Phot., *Bibl.* ch. cxx);—though why this invidious distinction of Irenæus among all the clerical corruptors of "tradition" is not clear. The only surviving work of Irenæus in four prolific Books is his notable *Adversus Hæreses*, or, as was its full title, "A Refutation and Subversion of Knowledge falsely so Called,"—though he succeeds in falsely subverting no little real knowledge by his own idle fables. This

work is called "one of the most precious remains of early Christian antiquity." Bishop St. Irenæus quotes one apt sentiment from Homer, the precept of which he seems to approve, but which he and his Church confrères did not much put into practice:

> "Hateful to me that man as Hades' gates,
> Who one thing thinks, while he another states."
> (*Iliad,* ix, 312, 313; *Adv. Haer.* III, xxxiii, 3.)

JESUS DIED OF OLD AGE!

Most remarkable of the "heresies" attacked and refuted by Bishop Irenæus, is one which had just gained currency in written form in the newly published "Gospels of Jesus Christ," in the form of the "tradition" that Jesus had been crucified to death early in the thirties of his life, after a preaching career of only about one year, according to three of the new Gospels, of about three years, according to the fourth. This is rankly false and fictitious, on the "tradition" of the real gospel and of all the Apostles, avows Bishop Irenæus, like Bishop Papias earlier in the century; and he boldly combated it as "heresy." It is not true, he asserts, that Jesus Christ died so early in life and after so brief a career. "How is it possible," he demands, "that the Lord preached for one year only?"; and on the quoted authority of John the Apostle himself, of "the true Gospel," and of "all the elders," the saintly Bishop urges the falsity and "heresy" of the Four Gospels on this crucial point. Textually, and with quite fanciful reasonments, he says that Jesus did not die so soon:

"For he came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are born again to God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age; a youth for youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise. Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be 'the first-born from the dead.'

"They, however, that they may establish their false opinion regarding that which is written, 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,' main-

tain that he preached for one year only, and then suffered in the twelfth month. [In speaking thus], they are forgetful to their own disadvantage, destroying His work and robbing Him of that age which is both more necessary and more honourable than any other; that more advanced age, I mean, during which also, as a teacher, He excelled all others. . . .

"Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends onward to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, *which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify;* those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, (affirming) *that John conveyed to them that information.* AND HE REMAINED AMONG THEM UP TO THE TIMES OF TRAJAN [Roman Emperor, A. D. 98–117]. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other Apostles also, and heard the very same account from them, and bear testimony as to [the validity of] the statement. *Whom then should we rather believe?"* (Iren. *Adv. Hær.* Bk. II, ch. xxii, secs. 3, 4, 5; *ANF.* I, 391–2.)

The Bishop's closing question is pertinent, and we shall come back to it in due course.

Irenæus also vouches his belief in magic arts, repeating as true the fabulous stories of Simon Magus and his statue in the Tiber and the false recital of the inscription on it; and as a professional heresy-hunter he falls upon Simon as the Father of Heresy: "Now this Simon of Samaria, from whom all heresies derive their origin. . . . The successor of this man was Menander, also a Samaritan by birth; and he, too, was a perfect adept in the practice of magic." (*Adv. Hær.* I, xxiii; *ANF.* i, 348.)

9. TERTULLIAN: Bishop of Carthage, in Africa; ex-Pagan born about 160, died 220. He was "the first of the Latin theological writers; . . . and the first witness to the existence of a Latin Bible . . . Tertullian's canon of the O. T. included the deutero-canonical books —[*i. e.* the forged apocrypha]. . . . He also cites the Book of Henoch [Enoch] as inspired, . . . also recognizes IV Esdras and the Sibyl." (*CE.* xiv, 525.)

He was the most violent diatribist of them all in promoting the Christian religion, but renounced Christianity after 200 and became equally violent in propagating the extravagant heresy of Montanus. In this recantation of faith he gave evidence that he was in error in his former complete acceptance of Christianity as the last word and

irrevocable posture in revealed truth,—and revealed his own errant credulity. In attacking the heretics—before he became one, of the most preposterous sect,—he thus formulates the assurance of the finality of Christian Faith: "One has succeeded in finding *definite truth, when he believes. . . . After we have believed, search should cease.*" (*Against Heresies*, ch. xi; *ANF.* iii, 248.) Tertullian is noted for several declamations regarding the assurance of faith which have become famous, as they are fatuous: "*Credo quia incredibilis est*—I believe because it is unbelievable"; and, like Paul's "I am become a fool in glorying," he vaunts thus his own folly: "Other matters for shame I find none which can prove me to be shameless in a good sense, and foolish in a happy one, by my own contempt for shame. The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed [to believe it] because men must needs be ashamed of it. And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. And He was buried and rose again; the fact is certain because it is impossible." (*De Carne Christi*, ch. v; *ANF.* iii, 525.) Reasoning thus,—or quite without reason—Christians yet believe these confessed absurdities and impossibilities.

Tertullian denounces the sin of theatre-going, and in this awful illustration he invokes his God to witness of one of his lies to God's glory: "We have the case of the woman—the Lord Himself is witness—who went to the theatre, and came back possessed. In the outcasting (exorcism), accordingly, when the unclean creature was upbraided with having dared to attack a believer, he firmly replied: 'And in truth I did most righteously, for I found her in my domain.'" (*De Spectaculis*, ch. xxvi; *ANF.* iii, 90.) In one of his sumptuary diatribes on woman's dress—yet a favorite theme of the Vicars of God, though nowadays the complaint is of nether brevity—he warns and assures: "to *us* the Lord has, even by revelations, measured the space for the veil to extend over. For a certain sister of ours was thus addressed by an angel, beating her neck," and telling her that she had as well be "bare down to your loins" as any elsewhere below the neck. (*On the Veiling of Virgins*, ch. xvii; *ANF.* iv, 37.) And he expresses the clerical concept of women, saying that "*females, subjected as they are throughout to men*, bear in their front an honourable mark of their virginity." (*Ib.* ch. x, p. 33.) The celibate Fathers all glorified the suppression of sex: "Marriage replenishes the earth, virginity fills Paradise," says

St. Jerome. (*Adv. Jovianum*, I, 17; *N&PNF.* vi, 360.) The Fathers regarded Woman as did St. Chrysostom: "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill!" Good Father Tertullian, in his *Exhortation to Chastity*, has chapters captioned: "Second Marriage a Species of Adultery," and "Marriage Itself Impugned as akin to Adultery." (*On Chastity*, chs. ix, x; *ANF.* iv, 55.)

Strongly, and upon what seems good physiological reason, he "denies the virginity of Mary, the mother of Christ, *in partu*, though he affirms it [oddly] *ante partum*." (*CE.* xiv, 523.) Father Tertullian was strong in advocacy of virginity not alone feminine, but of the men, exclaiming, "So many men-virgins, so many voluntary eunuchs" (*Ib.*). He commends with marked approval the fanatical incitation of the Christ to self-mutilation "for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Mt. xix, 11), and avers that to this same cause was due Paul's much-complained-of "thorn in the flesh," saying: "The Lord Himself opens the kingdoms of heaven to eunuchs, as being Himself a virgin; to whom looking, the apostle [Paul] also—*for this reason*—gives the preference to continence (I Cor. vii, 1, 7, 37, 40). . . . 'Good,' he says, 'it is for a man not to have contact with her, for nothing is contrary to good except evil.'" (*On Monogamy*, ch. iii; *ANF.* iv, 60.) For like reason it was, he assures, that Noah was ordered to take two of each animal into the ark, "for fear that even beasts should be born of adultery. . . . Even unclean birds were not allowed to enter with two females each." (*Ib.* ch. iv; p. 62.) Father Tertullian shares the fantastic notions of natural history stated by Bishop St. Barnabas; in proof of the eternal renovation of all things, Tertullian says: "The serpent crawls into a cave and out of his skin, and uncoils himself in a new youth; with his scales, his years, too, are repudiated. The hyena, if you observe, is of annual sex, alternately masculine and feminine. . . . The stag, feeding on the serpent, languishes—from the effects of the poison—into youth." (*On the Pallium*, ch. iii; *ANF.* iv, 7.) Magic admirably supplements nature and medical remedies as cure for the scorpion's sting, assures Father Tertullian: "Among cures certain substances supplied by nature have very great efficacy; *magic* also puts on some bandages." (*Scorpiace*, ch. i; *ANF.* iii, 633.)

Like all the credulous ex-Pagan Fathers of Christianity, Tertul-

lian is a confirmed Sibyllist, and believes the forged Pagan oracles as inspired truth of God. Citing several of her "prophecies," he assures with confidence: "And the Sibyl is thus proved no liar." (*Pallium*, ch. ii; *ANF.* iv, 6.)

Tertullian admits, in a *tu quoque* argument, that the Christians are sun-worshippers: "You [Pagans] say we worship the sun; so do you." (*CE.* xiv, 525; *Ad. Nationes*, xiii; *ANF.* iii, 123.) He is in common with the Fathers in the belief in magic and astrology, which since Christ, however, are turned into holier channels in token of His divinity: "But Magi and astrologers came from the East (Matt. ii). We know the mutual reliance of magic and astrology. The interpreters of the stars, then, were the first to announce Christ's birth, the first to present gifts. . . . Astrology now-a-days, forsooth, treats of Christ—is the science of the stars of Christ; not of Saturn, or of Mars. But, however, that science has been allowed until the Gospel, in order that after Christ's birth no one should thenceforward interpret anyone's nativity by the heaven." (*On Idolatry*, ch. ix; *ANF.* iii, 65.)

In common with all the Fathers, Tertullian appeals to the Phœnix as proof supreme of the resurrection of the body. It will be noticed, that the modern false translators of our Bibles have slipped in another bit of falsification by suppressing the word "phœnix" in the passage quoted by Tertullian, and have substituted the word "palm-tree" to express the flourishing state of the righteous, as there depicted:

"Then take a most complete and unassailable symbol of our hope [of resurrection], subject alike to life and death. I refer to the bird which is peculiar to the East, famous for its singularity, marvelous from its posthumous life, which renews its life in a voluntary death; its dying day is its birthday, for on it it departs and returns: once more a *phœnix* where just now there was none; once more himself, but just now out of existence; another, yet the same. What can be more express and more significant for our subject; or to what other thing can such a phenomenon bear witness? God even in His own Scripture says: 'The righteous shall flourish like the *phœnix*' [Greek Septuagint: *Dikaios os phœnix anthesei;* Ps. xcii, 12]. Must men die once for all, while birds in Arabia are sure of a resurrection?" (Tert., *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, ch. xiii; *ANF.* iii, 554.)

Father Tertullian vouches, too, with the other Fathers, for the bogus official Report of Pilate to Caesar, and for Pilate's conversion

to Christianity, saying: "All these things Pilate did to Christ; and now in fact a Christian in his own convictions, he sent word of Him to the reigning Cæsar, who was at the time Tiberius. Yes, and even the Cæsars would have believed on Christ, if either the Cæsars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Cæsars." (*Apol.* ch. xxi; *ANF.* iii, 35.) Father Tertullian gives full credence to the fable of the Septuagint, and assures the Emperors: "To this day, at the temple of Serapis, the libraries of Ptolemy are to be seen, with the identical Hebrew originals in them." (*Apology, to the Rulers of the Roman Empire,* I, xviii; *ANF.* iii, 32.) And, as all the other Fathers, he gives full faith and credit to the Pagan gods as "effective witnesses for Christ";—"Yes, and we shall prove that your own gods are effective witnesses for Christ. . . . Against the Greeks we urge that Orpheus, at Piera, Musæus at Athens, (etc.) imposed religious rites. . . . Numa Pompilius laid on the Romans a heavy load of costly superstitions. Surely Christ, then, had a right to reveal Deity." (*Apol.* ch. xxi; *ANF.* iii, 36.) Like the other Fathers, Tertullian is also in the ranks of patristic forgers of holy fables, being either the author or the publisher of "The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas," the fabulous Martyrdom of two of the Church's most celebrated bogus Saints, annexed to his accredited works. (*ANF.* iii, 699–706.)

10. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: (c. 153–c. 215). Ex-Pagan; head of the catechetical school of Alexandria; tutor of Origen. He wrote an *Exhortatio to the Heathen, the Pædagogus,* or *Instructor,* and eight books called *Stromata,* or *Miscellanies.* From the latter a few random passages are taken which fully accredit him among the simple-minded and credulous Fathers of Christianity.

Clement devotes ample chapters to showing the "Plagiarism by the Greeks of the Miracles related in the Sacred Books of the Hebrews"; he quotes as inspired the forged book "Peter's Preaching," and the heathen Sibyls and Hystaspes; he assures us, with his reason therefor, that "The Apostles, following the Lord, preached the Gospel to those in Hades. For it was requisite, in my opinion, that as here, so also there, the rest of the disciples should be imitators of the Master." Abraham was a great scientist: "As then in astronomy we have Abraham as an instance, so also in arithmetic we have the same

Abraham," the latter diploma being founded on the feat that Abraham, "hearing that Lot had been taken captive, *numbered* his own servants, 318"; this mystic number, expressed in Greek letters T I E, used as numerals: "the character representing 300 (T) is the Lord's sign (Cross), and I and E indicate the Saviour's name," *et cetera*, of cabalistic twaddle. (Strom. VI, xi; *ANF.* ii, 499.) Clement believes the heathen gods and the Sibyls, and all the demi-gods and myths of Greece: "We have also demonstrated Moses to be more ancient, not only than those called poets and wise men, but than most of their deities. Not alone he, but the Sibyl, is more ancient than Orpheus. . . . On her arrival at Delphi she sang:

> 'O Delphians, ministers of far-darting Apollo,
> I come to declare the mind of Ægis-bearing Zeus,
> Enraged as I am at my own brother Apollo.' " (*Strom.* ii, 325.)

11. ORIGEN: born in Alexandria, Egypt, about 165; a wild fanatic, he made himself "a eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake"; died at Tyre or Cæsarea about 254; was the first of the Fathers said to be born of Christian parents; he was a pupil and protégé of Clement of Alexandria. Origen was the greatest theologian and biblical scholar of the Church up to his time; he was the author of the famous *Hexapla*, or comparative edition of the Bible in Hebrew, with Greek transliteration and the Greek texts of the Septuagint and other versions in six parallel columns. Origen was badly tainted with the Arian heresy which denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and was deposed from the priesthood, but his deposition was not generally recognized by all the Churches,—which again proves that they were not then subject to Rome. For sheer credulity and nonsense Father Origen was the peer of any of the Pagan-born Patriarchs of "the new Paganism called Christianity," as is evidenced by the following extracts from his chief works.

Accepting as living realities the heathen gods and their miracles, he argues that the Hebrews must have had genuine miracles because the heathens had many from their gods, which were, however, only devils; that the Hebrews viewed "with contempt all those who were considered as gods by the heathen, as not being gods, but demons, 'For all the gods of the nations are demons' (Ps. xcvi, 5). . . . In

the next place, miracles were performed in all countries, or at least in many of them, as Celsus himself admits, instancing the case of Æsculapius, who conferred benefits on many, and who foretold future events to entire cities,"—citing instances. If there had been no miracles among the Hebrews "they would immediately have gone over to the worship of those demons which gave oracles and performed cures." (*Contra Celsum*, III, ch. ii–iii; *ANF.* iv, 466.) The heathen oracles were indeed inspired and true, but were due to a loathsome form of demoniac inspiration, which he thus—(with my own polite omissions)—describes:

"Let it be granted that the responses delivered by the Pythian and other oracles were not the utterances of false men who pretended to a divine inspiration; but let us see if, after all, that they may be traced to wicked demons,—to spirits which are at enmity with the human race. . . . It is said of the Pythian priestess, that when she sat down at the mouth of the Castalian cave, the prophetic spirit of Apollo entered her private parts; and when she was filled with it, she gave utterance to responses which are regarded with awe as divine truths. Judge by this whether that spirit does not show its profane and impure nature." (*Contra Celsum*, VII, iii; *ANF.* iv, 611–612). . . . "It is not, then, because Christians cast insults upon demons that they incur their revenge, but because they drive them away out of the images, and from the bodies and souls of men." (*Ib.* c. xliii, p. 655.)

Father Origen clung to the pagan superstition that comets and new stars portend and herald great world-events, and urges that this undoubted fact gives credibility to the fabled Star of Bethlehem: "It has been observed that, on the occurrence of great events, and of mighty changes in terrestrial things, such stars are wont to appear, indicating either the removal of dynasties or the breaking out of wars, or the happening of such circumstances as may cause commotions upon the earth"—why not then the Star of Bethlehem? (*Contra Celsum*, I, lix; *ANF.* iv, 422.) All the stars and heavenly bodies are living, rational beings, having souls, as he curiously proves by Job and Isaiah, as well as upon clerical reason:

"Let us see what reason itself can discover respecting sun, moon, and stars. . . . To arrive at a clearer understanding on these matters, we ought first to inquire whether it is allowable to suppose that they are living

and rational beings; then, whether their souls came into existence at the same time with their bodies, or seem to be anterior to them; and also whether, after the end of the world, we are to understand that they are to be released from their bodies; and whether, as we cease to live, so they also will cease from illuminating the world. . . . We think, then, that they may be designated as living beings, for this reason, that they are said to receive commandments from God, which is ordinarily the case only with rational beings: 'I have given commandments to all the stars' (Isa. xiv, 12), says the Lord." (*De Principiis*, I, vii; *ANF.* iv, 263.)

12. LACTANTIUS: (–?–330). Ex-Pagan, and eminent Christian author and defender of the faith. On account of his great reputation for learning, he was invited by the Emperor Constantine to become the tutor of his son Crispus, about 312–318 A. D. Thus, omitting two entire volumes (V and VI) of the Fathers, we are brought to the beginning of Christianity as the official or state religion—accredited yet by fables and propagated by superstitious myth. The great work of Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, dedicated to the Emperor, was thus addressed: "We now commence this work under the auspices of your name, O mighty Emperor Constantine, who were the first of the Roman princes to repudiate errors, and to acknowledge and honour the majesty of the one and only true God." (I, i.) This work, in seven lengthy Books, occupies over 200 double-columns of vol. VII of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

Written for the purpose of confirming Constantine in his very uncertain "Christian" faith, and to appeal for conversion of the higher classes of the Pagans under the imperial favor, no work of the Fathers is more positive in the recognition of the Pagan gods as divine realities, who are rather demons of very active malignity; and none equalled him in profuse appeals to the Pagan gods and the Sibyls as their prophetesses, as divine "testimonies" to Jesus Christ and virtually every natural and supernatural act attributed to him in the romantic Gospels. In fact, his whole work is a sort of digest of Pagan mythology taken as divinely true and inspired antecedents and evidences of the fictitious "facts" of the new Paganism called Christianity. We have already noticed some of his tributes to the Sibyls as prophecies of Jesus Christ; as it is impossible to cite but a few out of exceeding many, these are selected, demonstrating the origins of the heathen

gods as actually demons; the verity of their being, words and deeds, and that they one and all testify of Jesus Christ and the holy mysteries of the Christian faith. In a word, Christianity is founded on and proved by Pagan myths. And first, of the demon-gods, for whom he thus vouches:

"God in his forethought, lest the devil, to whom from the beginning He had given power over the earth, should by his subtility either corrupt or destroy men, . . . sent angels for the protection and improvement of the human race; and inasmuch as He had given these a free will, He enjoined them above all things not to defile themselves. . . . He plainly prohibited them from doing that which He knew that they would do, that they might entertain no hope of pardon. Therefore, while they abode among men, that most deceitful ruler of the earth . . . gradually enticed them to vices, and polluted them by intercourse with women. Then, not being admitted into heaven on account of the sins into which they had plunged themselves, they fell to the earth. Thus from angels the devil makes them to become his satellites and attendants.

"But they who were born from these, because they were neither angels nor men, but bearing a kind of mixed nature, were not admitted into hell as their fathers were not into heaven. Thus there became two kinds of demons; one of heaven, the other of the earth. The latter are the evil spirits, the authors of all the evils which are done, and the same devil is their prince. Whence Trismegistus calls him the ruler of demons. . . . They are called demons, that is, skilled and acquainted with matters; for they think that these are gods.

"They are acquainted, indeed, with many future events, but not all, since it is not permitted to them entirely to know the counsel of God. These contaminated and abandoned spirits, as I say, wander over the whole earth, and contrive a solace for their own perdition by the destruction of men. Therefore they fill every place with snares, frauds and errors; for they cling to individuals, and occupy whole houses from door to door. . . . And these, since spirits are without substance and not to be grasped, insinuate themselves into the bodies of men; and secretly working in their inward parts, they corrupt the health, hasten diseases, terrify their souls with dreams, harass their minds with phrenzies, that by these means they may compel men to have recourse to their aid." (Lact. *Divine Instit.* II, xv; *ANF.* vii, 64.)

He assures us, in chapter headings, and much detail of text: "That Demons have no Power over Those who are Established in the Faith" (Ch. xvi); "That Astrology, Soothsaying, and Similar Arts are the

Inventions of Demons" (Ch. xvii). These demon-gods are the most potent witnesses to the Christian faith, and scores of times he cites and appeals to them. The Hermes Trismegistus so often quoted and vouched for, is the god Mercury "Thrice Greatest," and is the greatest of the Christian witnesses. In many chapters the "divine testimonies" of Trismegistus, Apollo, and the other demon-gods, are confidently appealed to and their proofs recited. He proves the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead by renewed appeals to Hermes, Apollo, and the Sibyl: "Of the Soul, and the Testimonies concerning its Eternity" (Ch. xiii). "And I will now allege the testimony of the prophets. . . . *Hermes*, describing the nature of man, that he might know that he was made by God, introduced this statement. . . . Let us therefore seek greater testimony. A certain Polites asked *Apollo* of Miletus whether the soul remains after death or goes to dissolution; and he replied in these verses [quoting the response]. What do the Sibylline poems say? Do they not declare that this is so, when they say that the time will come when God will judge the living and the dead?—whose authority we will hereafter bring forward. . . . Therefore the Son of the most high and mighty God shall come to judge the quick and the dead, *as the Sibyl testifies* and says [quoting]. . . . *'Dies irae, dies illa, Teste David et Sibylla.'* " (*Ibid*, VII, chs. xiii, xxii; *ANF*. vii, 210, 218.)

Malignantly powerful as these demon-gods are, the simple but potent name of Christ, or the "immortal sign" of the Cross, on the instant renders them impotent and puts them to flight; all the demon-gods may be evoked by magic, only Christ cannot be thus conjured.

As for man—here occurring the famous epigram *Homo ex humo:* "He formed man out of the dust of the ground, from which he was called man, because he was made from the earth. Finally Plato says that the human form was godlike; as does the Sibyl, who says,—'Thou are my image, O man, possessed of right reason.' (*Ib*. II, lviii; p. 58.) Chapter vi is entitled, "Almighty God begat His Son; and the Testimonies of the Sibyls and of Trismegistus concerning Him"; and he urges: "But that there is a Son of the Most High God is shown not only by the unanimous utterances of the prophets, but also by the declaration of Trismegistus and the predictions of the Sibyls [quoting them at length]. The Erythrean Sibyl proclaims

the Son of God as the leader and commander of all [quoting]. . . . And another Sibyl enjoins: 'Know him as your God, who is the Son of God'; and the Sibyl calls Him 'Counsellor.'" (*Ib.* IV, vi; p. 105.)

THE PAGAN "LOGOS" CHRISTIANIZED

Treating at length of the prolific adoption and adaptation by "that new Paganism later called Christianity," of the terms, rites and ceremonies of Paganism, *CE.* says: "Always the Church has forcefully moulded words, and even concepts (as Saviour, Epiphany, Baptism, Illimination, Mysteries, *Logos*, to suit her own Dogma and its expression. It was thus that John could take the [Pagan] expression 'Logos,' mould it to his Dogma, cut short all perilous speculation among Christians, and assert once for all that the 'Word was made Flesh' and was Jesus Christ." (*CE.* xi, 392.) And thus Father Lactantius, appealing to Pagan gods and Sibyls for cogent confirmation, deals with the ancient Pagan notion of the "Logos," converted now into a "revealed" and most holy Christian Mystery and the Son of God:

"For though He was the Son of God from the beginning, He was born again a second time according to the flesh: and this two-fold birth of His has introduced great terror into the minds of men, and overspread with darkness even those who retained the mysteries of true religion. But we will show this plainly and clearly. . . . Unless by chance we shall profanely imagine, as *Orpheus* supposed, that God is both male and female. . . . But *Hermes* also was of the same opinion, when he says that He was 'His own father' and 'His own mother' ['self-father and self-mother']. . . . John also thus taught: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made.'

"But the Greeks speak of Him as the *Logos*, more befittingly than we do as the word, or speech: for *Logos* signifies both speech and reason, inasmuch as He is both the speech and reason of God. . . . Zeno represents the *Logos* as the arranger of the established order of things, and the framer of the universe. . . . For it is the spirit of God which he named the soul of Jupiter. For *Trismegistus*, who by some means or other searched into almost all truth, often describes the excellence and majesty of the Word." (Lact. *Div. Inst.* IV, viii-ix; *ANF.* vii, 106–7.)

THE SAINTLY "FATHERS" OF THE FAITH

As there can be no more positive and convincing proof that the Christ was and is a Pagan Myth,—the old Greek "Logos" of Heraclitus and the Philosophers revamped by the Greek priest who wrote the first chapter of the "Gospel according to St. John" and worked up into the "Incarnate Son" of the old Hebrew God for Christian consumption as the most sacred Article of Christian Faith and Theology, I append to the admission of Father Lactantius the culminating evidences of the "Gospel" and the further confession of the Church through the *Catholic Encyclopedia.* The inspired "revelation" of the Holy Ghost concerning the holy Pagan doctrine of the "Creative *Logos*" or "Word of God," made flesh in Jesus Christ, is thus "taken and moulded to his dogma" by the Holy Saint John:

"In the beginning was the *Logos,* and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him [*i. e.* by the *Logos*]; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John, i, 1–3.)

The doctrine of the *Logos* was a Pagan speculation or invention of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who lived 535–475 Before Christ, and had never heard of Christ. From it the science of Logic takes its name; and on it the first principle of Stoicism and the Christian doctrine of "The Word" are based. If this startling statement out of secular history is questioned, let *CE.* bear its clerical witness to the Pagan origin of the *Logos* and the curious Christian metamorphosis of it wrought by "St. John" and the Church Fathers:

"The word *Logos* (Gr. *Logos;* Lat. *Verbum*) is the term by which Christian theology in the Greek language designates the Word of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Before St. John had *consecrated* this term *by adopting it,* the Greeks and the Jews had used it to express religious conceptions which, under divers titles, have exercised a certain influence on Christian theology. . . . It was in Heraclitus that the *theory* of the *Logos appears for the first time,* and it is doubtless for this reason that, first among the Greek philosophers, Heraclitus was regarded by St. Justin (Apol. I, 46) as a Christian before Christ. . . . It *reappears in the writings of the Stoics,* and it is especially *by them* that this *theory is developed.* God, *according to them,* 'did not make the world as an artisan does his work —[though Genesis ii says he did]—but it is by wholly penetrating all mat-

ter—[thus a kind of *ether*]—that He is the *Demiurge* of the universe.' He penetrates the world 'as honey does the honeycomb' (Tertullian, Adv. Hermogenem, 44). . . . This Logos is at the same time *a force and a law* —[How, then, a Second *Person* Trinitarian God?]. . . . Conformably to *their* exegetical habit, the Stoics made *of the different gods* personifications of the Logos, *e. g. of Zeus* and above all *of Hermes*. . . . In the [apocryphal] Book of Wisdom this personification is more directly implied, and a parallel is established between Wisdom and the Word. In Palestinian Rabbinism the Word (Memra) is very often mentioned. . . . It is the Memra of Jahveh which lives, speaks, and acts. . . . Philo's problem was of the philosophical order; God and man are infinitely distant from each other; and it is necessary to establish between them the relations of action and of prayer; the Logos is here the intermediary. . . . Throughout so many diverse [Pagan and Jewish] concepts may be recognized a fundamental doctrine: the Logos is an intermediary between God and the world; *through it God created the world* and governs it; through it also men know God and pray to Him. . . . The term Logos is found only in the Johannine writings. . . . This resemblance [to the notion in the Book of Wisdom] suggests *the way by which the doctrine of the Logos entered into Christian theology.*" (*CE.* ix, 328–9.)

Thus confessedly is the Divine Revelation of the "Word made flesh" a Pagan-Jewish Myth, and the very Pagan Demiurge is the Christian Christ—"Very God"—and the "Second Person of the Blessed Trinity"! Here is the evolution of a Pagan speculation into a Christian revelation: Heraclitus first devised "the theory of the Logos"; by the Stoics "this theory is developed" into the Demiurge —"at the same time a force and a law"—which wrought the several works of creation instead of Zeus or Hermes. In the admittedly forged *Book of Wisdom,*—which is nevertheless part of the inspired Canon of the Catholic Bible,—the Pagan Demiurge becomes Divine Wisdom and "paralleled" with "the Word" of the Hebrew God, and "is the Memra of Jahveh which lives, speaks, acts." The Jewish philosopher Philo evolved it into "an intermediary—[Mediator]— between God and the world, through which God created the world." This Pagan notion echoes in: "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 *Tim.* ii, 5.) Then comes the Christian Greek priest who wrote the first chapter of "the Gospel according to John," and, Lo! "the Logos [Word] was God. . . . All things were made by him"! The Pagan speculation is first philoso-

phized, then personified, then Deified into the "Second Person" of a Blessed Trinity which was first dogmatized in 381 A. D.; and the blasphemy laws of England and a number of American States decree imprisonment for ridiculing this Most Holy Mystery of Christian Faith. Yet Christians decry the doctrine of Evolution and pass laws to outlaw teaching it.

Having pursued these incontestable Pagan "proofs" through his seven Books, and so vindicated the truth and divinity of Christianity, the eminent Doctor Lactantius concludes with this strange apostrophe to the near-Pagan Emperor, assuring him of the overthrow now of all error and the triumph of Catholic Truth: "But all *fictions* have now been hushed, Most Holy Emperor, since the time when the great God raised thee up for the restoration of the house of justice, and for the protection of the human race. . . . Since the truth now comes forth from obscurity, and is brought into light"! (*Ib.* VII, xxvi; p. 131.) Father Lactantius then quite correctly, from a clerical viewpoint, defines truth and superstition, but oddly enough confuses and misapplies the terms so far as respects the Christian religion: "Truly religion is the cultivation of the truth, but superstition is that which is false. . . . But because the worshippers of the gods imagine themselves to be religious, though they are superstitious, they are neither able to distinguish religion from superstition, nor to express the meaning of the names." (*Ib.* IV, xxviii; p. 131.)

13. AUGUSTINE (354–430): Bishop of Hippo, in Africa; "Saint, Doctor of the Church; a philosophical and theological genius of the first order, dominating, like a pyramid, antiquity and the succeeding ages. . . . Compared with the great philosophers of past centuries and modern times, he is the equal of them all; among theologians he is undoubtedly the first, and such has been his influence that none of the Fathers, Scholastics, or Reformers has surpassed it." (*CE.* ii, 84.) This fulsome pæan of praise sung by the Church of its greatest Doctor, justifies a sketch of the fiery African Bishop and a look into his monumental work, *De Civitate Dei*—"The City of God," written between the years 413–426 A. D. This will well enough show the quality of mind of the man, a monumentally superstitious and credulous Child of Faith; and throw some light on the psychology of the Church which holds such a mind as its greatest Doctor,

towering like a pyramid over the puny thinkers and philosophers of past centuries and of modern times. We may let *CE.* draw the biographical sketch in its own words, simply abbreviated at places to save space. Augustine's father, Patricius, was a Pagan, his mother, Monica, a convert to Christianity; when Augustine was born "she had him signed with the cross and enrolled among the catechumens. Once, when very ill, he asked for baptism, but, *all danger being passed,* he deferred receiving the sacrament, thus yielding to a deplorable *custom of the times.*" When sixteen years old he was sent to Carthage for study to become a lawyer; "Here he formed a sinful liason with the person who bore him a son (372)—[Adeodatus, "the gift of God"]—'the son of his sin'—an entanglement from which he only delivered himself, at Milan, after fifteen years of its thralldom." During this time Augustine became an ardent heretic: "In this same year Augustine fell into the snares of the Manichæans. . . . Once won over to this sect, Augustine devoted himself to it with all the ardor of his character; he read all its books, adopted and defended all its opinions. His furious proselytism drew into error [several others named]. It was during this Manichæan period that Augustine's literary faculties reached their full development." . . .

In 383 Augustine, at the age of twenty-nine, went to Italy, and came to Milan, where he met and fell under the influence of Bishop Ambrose—[he who forged the Apostles' Creed]. "However, before embracing the Faith, Augustine underwent a three years' struggle. . . . But it was only a dream; his passions still enslaved him. Monica, who had joined her son at Milan, prevailed upon him [to abandon his mistress]; and though he dismissed the mother of Adeodatus, her place was soon filled by another. At first he prayed, but without the sincere desire of being heard.—[In his "Confessions" (viii, 17) he addresses God: "Lord, make me pure and chaste—*but not quite yet*"! Finally he resolved to embrace Christianity and *to believe as the Church believed.*]—The grand stroke of grace, at the age of thirty-three, smote him to the ground in the garden at Milan, in 386. . . . From 386 to 395 Augustine gradually became acquainted with the Christian doctrine, and in his mind *the fusion of Platonic philosophy with revealed dogmas* was taking place. . . . So long, therefore, as his philosophy agrees with his religious doctrines,

St. Augustine is frankly neo-Platonist; as soon as a contradiction arises, he never hesitates to *subordinate* his philosophy to religion, *reason to faith!* (p. 86) . . . He thought too easily to find Christianity in Plato, or Platonism in the Gospel. Thus he had imagined that in Platonism he had discovered the entire doctrine of the Word and the whole prologue of St. John." Augustine was baptized on Easter of 387. He did not think of entering the priesthood; but being in church one day at prayer, the clamor of the crowd caused him to yield, despite his tears, to the demand, and he was consecrated in 391, and entered actively into the fray. A great controversy arose "over these grave questions: Do the hierarchical powers depend upon the moral worth of the priest? How can the holiness of the Church be compatible with the unworthiness of its ministers?—[The moral situation must have been very acute to necessitate such a debate]. In the dogmatic debate he established the Catholic thesis that the Church, so long as it is upon earth, can, without losing its holiness, tolerate sinners within its pale for the sake of converting them"[?]—or their property.

In the *City of God,* which "is considered his most important work," Augustine "answers the Pagans, who attributed the fall of Rome (410) to the abolition of Pagan worship. In it, considering the problem of Divine Providence with regard to the Roman Empire, in a burst of genius he *creates the philosophy of history,* embracing as he does with a glance the destinies of the world grouped around the Christian religion, the only one which goes back to the beginning and leads humanity to its final term." (*CE.* ii, 84–89.) Let us now admire

AUGUSTINE'S "PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY"

—whereof, says His present Holiness in a special Encyclical on the great Philosopher: "The teaching of St. Augustine constitutes a precious statement of sublime truths." (*Herald-Tribune,* Apr. 22, 1930.)

The *City of God,* by which he intends the Christianized World-City of Rome, is a ponderous tome, which cost Augustine some thirteen years to write. Like the work of all the Fathers it is an embellished rehash of the myths of the Old Testament, highly spiced with "proofs" from the Pagan gods and their prophetic Sibyls, the

same style of exegesis being also used for the Gospels, all of which he accepts as Gospel truth. He begins his philosophizing of history by swallowing the "Sacred Science" of Genesis whole; he entitles a chapter: "Of the Falseness of the History which allots Many Thousand Years to the World's Past"; and thus sneeringly dismisses those who knew better: "They are deceived, too, by those highly mendacious documents which profess to give the history of many thousand years, though reckoning by the sacred writings, we find that not yet 6,000 years have passed. . . . There are some, again, who are of opinion that this is not the only world, but that there are numberless worlds." (*Civ. Dei*, Bk. xii, 10, 11; *N&PNF.* ii, 232, 233.) Such persons are not to be argued with but to be ridiculed: "For as it is not yet 6,000 years since the first man, who is called Adam, are not those to be ridiculed rather than refuted who try to persuade us of anything regarding a space of time so different from, so contrary to, the ascertained truth?" (*Ib.* xviii, 40; p. 384.) To prove that "there were giants in those days," and that the ante-Diluvians were of greater size than men of his times, he vouches: "I myself, along with others, saw on the shore at Utica a man's molar tooth of such a size, that if it were cut down into teeth such as we have, a hundred, I fancy, could have been made out of it. . . . Bones of almost incredible size have been found by exposure of sepulchres." (xv, 9; p. 291.) And he shows how, "according to the Septuagint, Methuselah survived the Flood by fourteen years." (xv, 11; p. 292.) He accepts the earth as flat and inhabited on the upper side only: "As to the fable that there are Antipodes, that is to say, men who are on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, men who walk with their feet opposite ours, is on no ground credible." (xvi, 9; p. 315.)

Augustine is credited with a scientific leaning towards the doctrine of Evolution and as recognizing the origin of species; but some of his species are truly singular, and withal are but variations from the original divine norm of Father Adam, who is father of them all. In all soberness, tinged with a breath of skepticism with respect to some, he thus philosophizes: "It is reported that some monstrous races of men have one eye in the middle of the forehead; some, the feet turned backward from the heel; some, a double sex, the right breast like a man, the left like a woman, and that they alternately beget and bring

forth; others are said to have no mouth. . . . They tell of a race who have two feet but only one leg, and are of marvellous swiftness, though they do not bend the knee; they are called Skiopedes, because in the hot weather they lie down on their backs and shade themselves with their feet. Others are said to have no head on their shoulders. . . . What shall we say of the Cynocephali, whose doglike head and barking proclaim them beasts rather than men? But we are not bound to believe all we hear of these monstrosities. . . . But who could enumerate all the human births that have differed widely from their ascertained parents? No one will deny that all these have descended from that one man, . . . that one first father of all. . . . Accordingly, it ought not to seem absurd to us, that as in the individual races there are monstrous births, so in the whole race there are monstrous races; . . . if they are human, they are descended from Adam." (xvi, 8; p. 315.)

It is not alone in the realm of the *genus homo* that oddities exist, in the animal world there are some very notable singularities, for which the Saint vouches with all confidence as out of his personal knowledge and experience. Several times he repeats the marvel of the peacock, "which is so favored by the Almighty that its flesh will not decay," and "which triumphs over that corruption from which even the flesh of Plato is not exempt." He says: "It seems incredible, but a peacock was cooked and served to me in Carthage; and I kept the flesh one year and it was as fresh as ever, only a little drier." (xxi, 4, 5; pp. 455, 458.) The now exploded doctrine of abiogenesis was strong with Augustine; some animals are born without sexual antecedents: "Frogs are produced from the earth, not propagated by male and female parents" (xvi, 7; p. 314); "There are in Cappadocia mares which are impregnated by the wind, and their foals live only three years." (xxi, 5; p. 456.) There was much question as to the efficacy of hell-fire in toasting lost souls through eternity. The master philosopher of all time solves the knotty problem in two chapters, under the titles: "2. Whether it is Possible for Bodies to last Forever in Burning Fire," and, "4. Examples from Nature proving that Bodies may remain Unconsumed and Alive in Fire." In the first place, before the lamentable Fall of Adam, our own bodies were imperishable; in Hell we will again get unconsumable bodies: "Even

this human flesh was constituted in one fashion before there was Sin, —was constituted, in fact, so that it could not die." (xxi, 8; p. 459.) But there are other proofs of this than theological say-so, the skeptical may have the proofs with their own eyes in present-day Nature: "There are animals which live in the midst of flames. . . . The salamander is well known, that it lives in fire. Likewise, in springs of water so hot that no one can put his hand in it with impunity, a species of worm is found, which not only lives there, but cannot live elsewhere. . . . These animals live in that blaze of heat without pain, the element of fire being congenial to their nature and causing it to thrive and not to suffer,"—an argument which "does not suit our purpose" on the point of painless existence in fire of these animals, in which particular the wisdom of God has differentiated the souls of the damned, that they may suffer exquisitely forever; in which argument Augustine implies the doctrine, as feelingly expressed by another holy Saint, the "Angelic Doctor" Aquinas: "In order that nothing may be wanting to the felicity of the blessed spirits in heaven, a perfect view is granted to them of the tortures of the damned"; all these holy ones in gleeful praise to God look down at the damned disbelievers "tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." (Rev. xiv, 10, 11.)

In the realm of inorganic nature are many marvels, a long catalogue of which our philosopher makes, and at several places repeats; some of these are by hearsay and current report, for which cautiously he does not vouch the truth; "but *these I know to be true:* the case of that fountain in which burning torches are extinguished, and extinguished torches are lit: and the apples of Sodom, which are ripe to appearance, but are filled with dust"! (xxi, 7; p. 458.) The diamond is the hardest known stone; so hard indeed that it cannot be cut or worked "by anything, except goat's blood." (p. 455.)

The greatest of Christian Doctors, pyramid of philosophers, has abiding faith in the reality of the Pagan gods, who, however, as held by all the Fathers, are really demons or devils; they are very potent as wonder-workers and magicians. Some of them, however, are evidently not of a malicious nature: "The god of Socrates, if he had a

god, cannot have belonged to this class of demons." (xiii, 27; p. 165.) Time and again he vouches for and quotes the famous Hermes Trismegistus, who he assures us was the grandson of the "first Mercury." (viii, 23, 24; pp. 159, 161.) And for history he says, that "At this time, indeed, when Moses was born, Atlas is found to have lived, that great astronomer, the brother of Prometheus, and maternal grandson of the elder Mercury, of whom that Mercury Trismegistus was the grandson." (xviii, 39; p. 384.) Also that "Picus, son of Saturn, was the first king of Argos." (xviii, 15; p. 368.) He accepts as historic truth the fabulous founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus, their virgin-birth by the god Mars, and their nursing by the she-wolf, but attributes the last to the provident interference of the Hebrew God. Some of his comments might be applicable to One later Virgin-born. "Rhea, a vestal virgin, who conceived twin sons of Mars, as they will have it, in that way honoring or excusing her adultery, adding as a proof that a she-wolf nursed the infants when exposed. . . . Yet, what wonder is it, if, to rebuke the king who had cruelly ordered them to be thrown into the water, God was pleased, after divinely delivering them from the water, to succor, by means of a wild beast giving milk, these infants by whom so great a City was to be founded?" (xviii, 21; p. 372.)

The great philosopher, at one with Cicero in this respect, distinguishes between the ancient fables of the gods in an age of ignorance and superstition, and those true histories of their later deeds in a time, such as that of the Founding of the City, when intelligence reigned among men. A singular reversion to the mental state of the Homeric ages would seem to have come upon men with the advent of the new Faith. Cicero had related the fables of Homer and contrasted them with the true history of Romulus and his more enlightened times, saying: "Homer had flourished long before Romulus, and there was now so much learning in individuals, and so generally diffused an enlightenment, that scarcely any room was left for fable. For antiquity admitted fables, and sometimes very clumsy ones; but this age of Romulus was sufficiently enlightened to reject whatever had not the air of truth"! On this the great Saint Augustine thus philosophizes,—accounting, indeed, for the age-long persistence of all superstitions, as due to inheritance and early teaching: "But who

believed that Romulus was a god except Rome, which was then small and weak? Then afterwards it was necessary that succeeding generations should *preserve the traditions of their ancestors;* that, *drinking in this superstition with their mother's milk,* their nation should grow great and dominate the world"? (xxii, 6; p. 483.) In likewise it may be queried: Who believed that Jesus was a virgin-born god except superstitious Pagans who already believed such things of Romulus, Apollo, Æsculapius, *et id omne genus?* and the succeeding generations, "drawing in this superstition with their mother's milk," have passed it on through the Dark Ages of Faith even unto our own day. Even the great St. Jerome has said, that no one would have believed the Virgin-birth of Jesus or that his mother was not an adulteress, "until *now, that the whole world has embraced the faith*"—and would therefore believe anything—except the truth!

All who did not believe such things, when related by the ex-Pagan Christians, were heretics instigated by the devil; for "the devil, seeing the temples of the gods deserted, and the human race running to the name of the living Mediator, has moved the heretics under the Christian name to resist the Christian doctrine." (xviii, 51; p. 392.) Whether St. Augustine, in his earlier Pagan years, practiced the arts of magic, as did many of the other ex-Pagan Christian Fathers, he maintained a firm Christian faith in magic and magicians, and explains how the gift is acquired. He gives an account of a remarkable lamp which hung in a temple of Venus in a great candelabra; although exposed to the open air, even the strongest winds could not blow out the flame. But that is nothing strange to the philosophic mind of the Saint: "For to this [unextinguishable lamp] we add a host of marvels wrought by man, or by magic, that is, by man under the influence of devils, or by the devils directly,—*for such marvels we cannot deny without impugning the truth of the sacred Scriptures we believe.* . . . Now, devils are attracted to dwell in certain temples by means of the creatures who present to them the things which suit their various tastes. . . . The devils cunningly seduce men and make of a few of them their disciples, who then instruct others. . . . Hence the origin of magic and magicians." (xxi, 6; p. 457.) A most notable example of magical power is that which transforms men into animals, sometimes effected by the potent word, sometimes through material

means, as where sundry inn-keepers used to put a drug into food which would work the transformation of their guests into wild or domestic animals.

The philosopher Saint vouches for such magical metamorphoses as of his own knowledge and on unimpeachable authority. At much length he relates: "A certain man named Præstantius used to tell that it happened to his father in his own house, that he took that poison in a piece of cheese, . . . and that he had been made a sumpter horse, and, along with other beasts of burden, had carried provisions for the Rhœtian Legion. And all this was found to have taken place just as he told. . . . These things have not come to us from persons we might deem unworthy of credit, but from informants we could not suppose to be deceiving us. Therefore, what men say and have committed to writing about the Arcadians being often changed into wolves by the Arcadian gods, or demons rather, and what is told in the song about Circe transforming the companions of Ulysses, if they were really done, may, in my opinion, have been in the way I have said—[that is, by demons through the permission of God]. . . . As for Diomede's birds, . . . that they bring water in their beaks and sprinkle it on the temple of Diomede, and that they fawn on men of Greek race and persecute aliens, is no wonderful thing to be done by the inward influence of demons." (xviii, 18; p. 370.) To the Saint and to all the Fathers, the air was full of devils: "All diseases of Christians are to be ascribed to these demons; chiefly do they torment fresh-baptized Christians, yea, even the guiltless new-born infant." (*De Divinatione Dæmonorum*, ch. iii),—a whole tome devoted to the prophetic works of the Devil, "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," as avouched in Holy Writ (II Thess. ii, 9); for: "The responses of the gods are uttered by impure demons with a strong animus against the Christians." (*De Civ. Dei*, xix, 23; p. 416.) And no wonder, for "by the help of magicians, whom Scripture calls enchanters and sorcerers, the devils could gain such power. . . . The noble poet Vergil describes a very powerful magician in these lines," (quoting; xxi, 6; p. 457).

Again, like all the holy Fathers and Popes down at least to Benedict XIV, elsewhere quoted, the great philosopher and Saint is a devoted Sibyllist, and frequently quotes and approves the utterances

of these Pagan Seeresses, inspired by the devil through the permission of the Christian God to reveal the holy mysteries of the Christian Faith. Augustine devotes a chapter, entitled "Of the Erythræan Sibyl, who is known to have sung many things about Christ more plainly than the other Sibyls," to these signal Pagan proofs of the Christ; and he dwells with peculiar zest on the celebrated "Fish Anagram." On this theme he enlarges: "This Sibyl certainly wrote some things concerning Christ which are quite manifest [citing instances]. . . . A certain passage which had the initial letters of the lines so arranged that these words could be read in them: '*Iesous Xristos Theou Uios Soter*'—[quoting the verses at length]. . . . If you join the initial letters in these five Greek words, they will make the word Ixthus, that is, 'fish,' in which word Christ is mystically understood, because he was able to live, that is, to exist, without sin, in the abyss of this mortality as in the depths of water." (xviii, 23; p. 372–3.)

With full faith the great Doctor Augustine accepts the old fable of the miraculous translation of the Septuagint, and to it adds some new trimmings betraying his intimate knowledge of the processes and purposes of God in bringing it about: "It is reported that there was an agreement in their words so wonderful, stupendous, and plainly divine, each one apart (for so it pleased Ptolemy to test their fidelity), they differed from each other in no word, or in the order of the words; but, as if the translators had been one, so what all had translated was one, because in very deed the one Spirit had been in them all. And they received so wonderful a gift of God, in order that these Scriptures might be commended not as human but divine, for the benefit of the nations who should at some time believe, as we now see them doing. . . . If anything is in the Hebrew copies and not in the version of the Seventy, the Spirit of God did not choose to say it through them, but only through the prophets. But whatever is in the Septuagint and not in the Hebrew copies, the same Spirit chose rather to say it through the latter, thus showing that both were prophets." (xviii, 42, 43; pp. 385–387.) If this latter be true, that some divine revelation is found in the Septuagint which is not in the Hebrew, and *vice versa*, how then can it be true, as the Saint has just said, and as all the Fathers say, that there was perfect agreement between the Hebrew original and the Greek translations? If matters in the Hebrew text were omitted in

the Greek, then the inspired truth of God was not in those parts of the original, or else what was inspired truth in the Hebrew became now false; and if there was new matter now in the Greek, such portions were not translation but were interpolations or plain forgeries of the translators, yet inspired by God. The divine origin of the Hebrew language, as invented by God for the use of Adam and Eve and their posterity, is thus fabled by the great Doctor: "When the other races were divided by their own peculiar languages [at Babel], Heber's family preserved that language which is not unreasonably believed to have been the common language of the race, and that on this account it was henceforth called Hebrew." (p. 122.) As for the origin of writing, our Saint agrees with St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and other erudite Saints, that "God himself showed the model and method of all writing when he delivered the Law written with his own finger to Moses." (White, *Warfare of Science against Theology*, ii, 181.)

This greatest philosopher of all time attacks with profound learning a problem which, he says, he had "previously mentioned, but did not decide," and he proceeds with acutest wisdom to solve the question: "Whether angels, inasmuch as they are spirits, could have bodily intercourse with women?" With all the powers of his mighty philosophico-clerical mind he reasons on the ethereal nature of angels, and reaches the conclusion, fortified by many ancient instances, that they can and do. There are, he points out, "many proven instances, that Sylvans and Fauns, who are commonly called 'Incubi,' had often made wicked assaults upon women, and satisfied their lusts upon them: and that certain devils, called Duses by the Gauls, are constantly attempting and effecting this impurity." (*City of God*, xv, 23; p. 303.) As the greatest Doctor and Theologian of the Church, he discusses weightily what books of Scripture are inspired and canonical, which are fables and apocryphal: "Let us omit, then, the fables of those Scriptures which are called apocryphal. . . . We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical Epistle"! (*Ibid*, p. 305.) Thus the great Doctor vindicates the potentiality of the Holy Ghost, in the guise of the angel Gabriel, to maintain carnal copulation with the "proliferous yet Ever Virgin" Mother of God; and vouches for the divinity of the crude Jewish forgery of the Book of Enoch, which

is duly canonized as genuine and authentic work of the mythical Patriarch, by the equally mythical "Apostle" author of the forged Epistle of Jude. So great a Doctor of the Church looks, by now, very much like an extraordinary "quack doctor" peddler of bogus nostrums.

Such are a few picked from numberless ensamples of the quasi-divine wisdom and philosophy of this unparalleled, pyramidal Saint and Doctor of the Church, who "never hesitated to subordinate his reason to Faith." Most luminously and profoundly of all the Fathers and Doctors, Augustine spoke the mind and language of the Church and of its Pagan-born Christianity; more ably than them all he used the same methods of propaganda of the Faith among the superstitious ex-Pagan Christians; with greater authority and effect than all the others, he exploited the same fables, the same falsehoods, the same absurdities, exhibited to the *n*-th degree the same fathomless fatuity of faith and subjugation of reason to credulity.

A final appeal to the Pagan Sibyls and to the fabulous Phœnix for "proofs" of the Christian mysteries, I add from the famous forged *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, falsely through the centuries attributed as the individual and collective inspired work of the mythic Twelve: "If the Gentiles laugh at us, and disbelieve our Scriptures, let at least their own prophetess *Sibylla oblige them to believe*, who says thus in express words: [quoting]. If, therefore, this prophetess confesses the Resurrection . . . it is vain for them to deny our doctrine. They say there is a bird single in its kind which affords a copious demonstration of the Resurrection. . . . They call it a phœnix, and relate [here repeating the old Pagan fable of the self-resurrecting phœnix]. If, therefore, as even themselves say, a resurrection is exhibited by means of an irrational bird, wherefore do they disparage our accounts, when we profess that He who by His power brings that into being which was not in being before, is able to restore this body, and raise it up again after its dissolution?" (*Apost. Const.* V, 1, vii; *ANF.* vii, 440–441.)

CHRISTIAN PAGANISM

The whole of Paganism we have seen taken over bodily into "that new Paganism later called Christianity," by the ex-Pagan Fathers of

the Christ's Church, and all its myths and fables urged by them as the credible and *only* "evidence of things not seen" of the new Faith. What does it all signify for proof of Christian Truth? "Nothing stands in need of lying but a Lie"; and by that unholy means we see the holy false new Faith established among the ignorant and superstitious Pagans.

These sainted ex-Pagan Fathers of Christianity, one and all, fully and explicitly accepted and believed in childlike simplicity of faith the reality and potency of their old heathen gods, reducing them only in immortal rank to demons or devils of fantastic origin and powers permitted by the One True God to work true miracles; by their inspired oracles to foretell futurity and the most sacred mysteries of the Christian faith, and maliciously to "imitate"—hundreds of years in advance—its most holy rites and sacraments; to endow their votaries with the gift of magic and the powers of magical practices,—practices to this day performed by their priestly successors under more refined euphemisms of thaumaturgy. To the malignant works of the Devil and the hordes of devils the Fathers imputed, and their now-a-day successors yet impute, the working of mighty lying wonders designed to thwart, and often very effective in "queering" the inscrutable plans and providences of their Almighty God. "When pious Christians," mordently says Middleton, "are arrived at this pitch of Credulity, as to believe that evil spirits or evil men can work real miracles, in defiance and opposition to the authority of the Gospels, their very piety will oblige them to admit as miraculous whatever is wrought in the defense of it, and so of course make them the implicit dupes of their wonder-workers." (*A Free Inquiry*, p. 71.)

This review of the ex-Pagan Fathers of Christ's True Church is made at some length because of its capital, fatal importance to the notion of the "authority," veracity and credibility of these the sole witnesses and vouchers for the pretended truth and validity of the new faith, and the "Gospel" wonders reputed as having occurred a century and more before their times, and for the foundation of the Church and the miraculous fundamentals of the Christian religion. Fabling, false and fatuous in point of every single pretended "proof" which they offer for Christianity, in every respect fatal to their intelligence, their intellectual honesty, their common veracity and general and

particular credibility with respect to matters both natural and supernatural—How can they be believed as to the miracles and miraculous and incredible basic "truths" of Christianity? False in one thing, false and discredited in all, must be the verdict of every one concerned to know the truth of the new Faith sponsored and established alone through the mongering of Pagan myths of these fatuous, childishly credulous, unscrupulous ex-Pagan Fathers of Christianity. They knew not fable from fact, and scrupled not to assert fable for fact, recklessly lying to the greater glory of God and glorification of themselves and their Paganized Church, in the name of Divinely revealed Truth of God. But, as we have seen, there can be no "divine revelation" of fanciful "fact" and dogma which for centuries had been, and in the early Christian ages were, the current mythology of credulous Pagandom. Thus the system of veneered Paganism which the ex-Pagan Fathers revamped under the name of Christianity, cannot be true; by a thousand tokens and tests of truth it is not true.

In the words of King Lear is the whole mythical scheme to be appraised and adjudged,—and junked:

> ". . . . . It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing!"

BUT—"*What profit has not that fable of Christ brought us!*"

Our review of the fabling forging Fathers of Christianity brings us through the epoch of the establishment of Christianity—the whole of the second and third centuries of the Christ,—the epoch (in the latter half of the second), when the forged "Gospel" biographies of the Demiurge-Christ, and the forged Epistles of the Apostles, were, out of hundreds of like pious Christian forgeries, worked into shape and put into circulation by the growing Churches zealously gathering swarms of illiterate and superstitious ex-Pagan "converts"—or perverts—into the Fold of Christ. With Eusebius and Lactantius, contemporaries and retainers of the "Christian" Constantine, we see the official "triumph" of Christianity in the early fourth century; with the Sainted Augustine, late in the fourth and early in the fifth centuries, we see the new Faith, by dint of Christian persecuting laws and

of patristic lying, well established in the Empire,—"the human race running to the name of the living Mediator," but yet, at the instigation of the Devil, disturbed and threatened with extinction by the Christian "heretics," of whom Augustine says there were ninety-three warring sects up to his time; and against whom this great Doctor and Saint produced that fearful text of the Wedding Feast, "Compel them to come in," and that other fatal bloody precept of the Christ: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me,"—murderous slogans of the Church Persecutrix which bloodily carried it to final triumph through a thousand years of the Dark Ages of Faith, as we shall soon see.

Others of the noted Fathers of the epochs under review will be noticed as the occasion arises. There are many of them; the four "great Latin Fathers . . . are undoubtedly Sts. Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great"; died 604. (*CE.* vi, 1.) Vast is their output of puerile superstition and pettyfogging dialectic, of which we have seen but some random ensamples. The overwhelming volume of patristic palaver of nonsense is evidenced by the "Migne Collection" of their writings, which comprises 222 ponderous tomes in Latin and 161 in Greek. (*CE.* vi, 16.)

In the next chapter we shall consider the "canonical" Gospels and Epistles, and the palpable convincing and convicting evidences of their forgery by the priests and Fathers—original forgeries themselves with multiplied forged "interpolations" or purpose-serving later additions to each of the original sacred forgeries.

CHAPTER V

THE "GOSPEL" FORGERIES

"Whether a Church which stands convicted of having forged its Creed, would have any scruple of forging its Gospels, is a problem that the reader will solve according to the influence of prejudice or probability on his mind." Taylor, *Diegesis,* p. 10.

LET US NOW take up the holy Evangels and Epistles of Christ-propaganda. After even our cursory examination of the welter of Gospels, Acts, Epistles and other pious frauds of Christian missionary-work, all admittedly forged by holy hands in the early Christian "age of apocryphal literature" in the names of Jesus Christ himself, of the Twelve pseudo-apostles and other Worthies, including Mother Eve, even the most credulous and uncritical Believer must feel the intrusion of some question: How came the four "Gospels according to" Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, to be sometime accepted as genuine and inspired? and, Why are there only Four out of so much greater a number, as we have seen in circulation and acceptance? The questions are pertinent, and shall be given fair answer.

This entire aggregation of forged religious writings, under the guise of genuine Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Apocalypses, falsely attributed to apostolic writers, is know together as "Old Christian Literature," whether now called "canonical" or apocryphal. Of it *EB.* says that this present distinction "does not, in point of fact, rest upon any real difference in the character or origin of the writings concerned, but only upon the assumption of their differing values as sacred or non-sacred books." (*EB.* iii, 3481.) Furthermore, the common characteristic and motive of them all is thus described, or explained: "To compose 'letters' under another name, especially under the name of persons whose living presentment, or real or supposed spiritual equip-

ment, it was proposed to set before the reader, was then just as usual as was the other practice of introducing the same persons into narratives and reporting their 'words' in the manner of which we have examples, in the case of Jesus, in the Gospels, and, in the case of Peter, Paul, and other apostles, in the Acts." (*EB.* iii, 3481.)

"The Gospel has come down to us," says Bishop Irenæus (about 185 A. D.), which the apostles did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. . . . For, after our Lord rose from the dead [the apostles] departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things sent from God to us, who indeed do equally and individually possess the Gospel of God." (Iren., *Adv. Hær*, Bk. III, ch. i; *ANF.* i, 414.) Bishop Irenæus and Bishop Papias have both averred that the Christ lived to old age (even at late as 98–117 A. D.), flatly denying thus as "heresy" the Gospel stories as to his crucifixion at about thirty years of age. In any event, the Apostles, according to the record, scattered "to the ends of the earth, preaching," orally, before they wrote anything at all.

But, says *CE.*, although "the New Testament was not written all at once, the books that compose it appeared one after another in the space of fifty years, *i. e.*, in the second half of the *first* century." (*CE.* xiv, 530.) That this last clause is untrue will be fully and readily demonstrated. This statement, too, contradicts Bishops Papias and Irenæus, who are, positively, the only two of the second century Fathers who up to their times at all mention written Gospels or their supposed authors, as we have seen and shall more particularly notice.

And *CE.* says, as *is* true, of the earliest existing manuscripts of any New Testament books: "We have New Testament MSS. written not much *more than 300 years* after the composition of the books"; and it admits (though with much *diminution of truth*, as we shall see): "And in them we find numerous differences, though but few of them are important." (*CE.* xiv, 526.) In this *CE.* at another place, and speaking much more nearly the truth, contradicts itself, saying: "The existence of *numerous* and, at times, *considerable differences* between the four canonical Gospels is a fact which has long been noticed and which all scholars readily admit. . . . Those evangelical records (SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke) whose mutual resemblances are obvious and strik-

ing, and . . . the narrative (that of St. John) whose relation with the other three is that of dissimilarity rather than that of likeness." (*CE.* vi, 658.)

But the so-called "canonical" books of the New Testament, as of the Old, are a mess of contradictions and confusions of text, to the present estimate of 150,000 and more "variant readings," as is well known and admitted. Thus *CE.*: "It is easy to understand how numerous would be the readings of a text transcribed as often as the Bible, and, as *only one reading can represent the original*, it follows that *all the others are necessarily faulty*. Mill estimated the variants of the New Testament at 30,000, and since the discovery of so many MSS. unknown to Mill, this number has greatly increased." (*CE.* iv, 498.) Who, then, is "inspired" to distinguish true from false readings, and thus to know what Jesus Christ and his entourage really said and did, or what some copyist's error or priest's forgery make them say or do, falsely? Of the chaos and juggling of sacred texts in the Great Dioceses of Africa, *CE.* says: "There never existed in early Christian Africa an official Latin text known to all the Churches, or used by the faithful to the exclusion of all others. The African bishops willingly allowed corrections to be made in a copy of the Sacred Scriptures, or even a reference, when necessary, to the Greek text. With some exceptions, it was the Septuagint text that prevailed, for the O. T., until the fourth century. In the case of the New, the MSS. were of the Western type. On this basis there arose a variety of translations and interpretations. . . . Apart from the discrepancies to be found in two quotations from the same text in the works of two different authors, and sometimes of the same author, we now know that of several books of Scripture there were versions wholly independent of each other." (*CE.* i, 193.)

Bishop Victor of Tunnunum, who died about 569 A. D. and whose work, says *CE.*, "is of great historical value," says that in the fifth century, "In the consulship of Messala, at the command of the Emperor Anastasius, the Holy Gospels, as written *Idiotis Evangelistis*, are corrected and amended." (Victor of T., *Chronica*, p. 89–90; cited by Dr. Mills, *Prolegom.* to R. V., p. 98.) This would indicate some very substantial tinkering with Holy Writ; which process was a continuing one, for, says *CE.*, "Under Sixtus V (1585–90) and Clement

VIII (1592–1605) the Latin Vulgate *after years of revision* attained its *present* shape." (*CE.*, xii, 769.) And the Vulgate, which was fiercely denounced as fearfully corrupt, was only given sanction of divinity by the Council of Trent in 1546, under the Curse of God against any who questioned it. Though this amendatory tinkering of their two Holinesses was *after* the Council of Trent had put the final Seal of the Holy Ghost on the Vulgate in 1546!

STILL TINKERING AT IT!

The ancient clerical trick of tampering with the "Word of God" and amending its plenary Divine Inspiration and Inerrancy, goes on apace today, even to the extent of putting a veneer of civilization on the barbarian Hebrew God, and warping his own barbarian words so as to make a semblance of a "God of Mercy" out of the self-styled "Jealous God" of Holy Writ.

In 1902, after the sacred Council of Trent, in 1546, had put the Curse of God on any further tinkering with the Inerrant Bible, His Holiness Leo XIII appointed a Commission of Cardinals, known as the Pontifical Biblical Commission, to further amend Divine Inspiration; in 1907, "the Commission, with the approval of the sovereign pontiff, invited the Benedictine Order to undertake a collection of the *variant readings* of the Latin Vulgate as a remote preparation for a *thoroughly amended edition.*" (*CE.* ii, 557.) This august body has recently laid before His Holiness, after all these years of labor, the revised text of the revelations of Moses in the Book of Genesis; and is now worrying with Exodus and the "Ten Commandments" in chapter XX thereof.

Associated Press dispatches published to the world today, relate that "the Vatican's International Commission on the revision of the Bible [is] taking steps to *correct* one of the most famous Biblical passages, Exodus xx, 5, *now believed* to have been *mistranslated*"! (N. Y. *Times*, May 18, 1930.) The actual text, and "what the Vatican Commission *thinks it should read*," are here quoted in the "deadly parallel" columns, so that all may judge of the immense farce and fraud of this capital falsification;—the material tampering being indicated by italics:

Exodus xx, 5—as is.	*Ditto—as falsified.*
"For I the Lord thy God am a *Jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children* unto the third and fourth generation *of them that hate me*"; . . .	"For I, the Lord thy God, am a *God of loving-kindness and mercy, considering the errors of the fathers as mitigating circumstances in judging the children* unto the third and fourth generation"!

Even a fool knows that no set of words, humanly or divinely devisable, could bear such enormity of contrary translation; this is self-evident. The simple Hebrew words of verse 5 do not admit of a word of tampering in translation. Even the present translations into modern languages make apparent the correctness of the familiar rendering. The words of verse 5—"visiting the iniquities . . . of them that hate me," close with a semicolon, followed immediately by their antithesis:—"*And* shewing mercy [Heb. *chesed*] unto thousands of *them that love me,* and keep my commandments." (v. 6; Deut. v, 9, 10.) The "Jealous God" pursues the progeny of those "that hate" him, and "shews mercy . . . to them that love" him. The inspired "correction" of the "mistranslation" leaves verse 6 meaningless and redundant.

But the two simple Hebrew words chiefly involved make this fraudulent "correction" ridiculous and impossible. In Hebrew, Yahveh says from Sinai: "*Anoki yahveh elohe-ka EL QANNA*—I Yahveh thy God [am a] *Jealous God.*" The only false translation in this verse is "*Lord* thy God" for the 6,000-times falsified "*Yahveh* thy God," as elsewhere noted. Always "*qanna*" means "jealous"—and is used of the "*jealous* god," husband, wife, etc. The "joker" in this false "correction" is apparent from the word "*chesed*—mercy," hundreds of times used in Holy Writ. There is *no* Hebrew word meaning "loving-kindness"; this is a fanciful rendering given by the pious translators to the same old word "*chesed*—mercy." Even the Infallible One knows —or can look in a Hebrew dictionary or concordance and see—that "*el qanna* . . . visiting iniquity"—cannot be twisted into "*el chesed* and *chesed* . . . shewing *chesed*—mercy" to only those that love him. And how many thousands of "corrections" of words "now believed mis-

translated," would be necessary to whitewash the barbarian Yahveh of Holy Writ into a "whited sepulchre" of civilized deity!

SOME TESTS FOR FORGERY

We have seen the debauchery of forgery out of which the Four Gospels were born. This makes pertinent the critical statement of one of the latest authorities on the subject: "Few genuine texts have come down to us from beyond the Middle Ages—most documents reaching us in the form of later copies made by scribes in monasteries"; and he adds: "The mere fact that documents have been accepted for centuries does not itself protect them from the tests of historical criticism." (Shotwell, *See of Peter*, Gen. Introd. xix, xxii.) It is pertinent to add here a paragraph from *CE.* which states with entire accuracy the elementary principles upon which literary criticism rests; due to the application of just these principles by honest and fearless critics, the Bible has been stripped of every clerical pretense of inspired inerrancy and of even common literary and historical honesty; so that even the inerrant Church has been driven to confess countless errors and forgeries; even, as we have seen, to the frank repudiation of the fables of Creation, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and the divine revelation of the Hebrew religion, which is thus shown to be a very human evolution. These critical principles have destroyed the vast mass of Hebrew and Christian apocrypha; and may now be applied to the New Testament booklets which yet make false pretense to divine inspiration of truth. Says *CE.:*

"Some broad principles [of literary criticism] are universally admitted by critical scholars. A fundamental one is that *a literary work always betrays the imprint of the age and environment in which it was produced;* another is that a plurality of authors is proved by well-marked differences of diction and style, at least when they coincide with *distinctions of viewpoint or discrepancies in a double treatment of the same subject.* A third received canon holds to a radical dissimilarity between ancient Semitic and modern Occidental, or Aryan, methods of composition." (*CE.* iv, 492.)

The lines last above in italics point to the most fatal of all proofs —that of "double treatment" or forged "interpolations," than which

nothing is clearer evidence of tampering and later fraudulent alterations of text. The most radical dissimilarity between the ancient Semitic methods of religious composition and our modern Occidental notions of literary honesty—or even of intelligent forgery—is, that the Hebrew and Greek religious forgers were so ignorant or careless of the principles of criticism, that they "interpolated" their fraudulent new matter into old manuscripts without taking care to erase or suppress the previous statements glaringly contradicted by the new interpolations. Though, as the great masses of the ignorant Faithful couldn't read, it may have suited the design of the priests to retain both contradictory matters, either of which might be used according to occasion to impose on their credulous Flocks.

When, therefore, in the same document, two statements of alleged fact or doctrine are found, one of which is in glaring contradiction of the other, one or the other is inevitably both false and to a moral certainty the work of a later and different hand. When, furthermore, one of the statements is consonant with the time and conditions under which it was supposedly written, or to which it refers, and the contradictory "betrays the imprint of the age and environment in which it was written," later and different from that of the original, and/or betrays "distinctions of viewpoint or discrepancies" from the earlier version, inevitably the latter convicts itself of being forged. With these established and admitted principles in mind, we may now look a bit closely at these questioned documents of the Four Gospels.

THE GOSPEL TITLES

These Four are themselves forgeries and apocryphal "in the sinister sense of bearing names to which they have no right," as well as by their contents being false, with many forged "interpolations" or spurious additions. Even if the Four Gospels were themselves genuine, as we shall see they are not, yet admittedly their present titles are not original and given to them by the writers. The present clerical position, seeking to save the works, is that, like the Acts of the Apostles, "the name was subsequently attached to the book, *just as the headings of the several Gospels were affixed to them.*" (*CE.* i, 117.) More particularly speaking of the Gospel titles, the same authority says: "The

first four historical books of the New Testament are *supplied* with titles (Gospel According to [Gr. *kata*] Matthew, According to Mark, etc.) which, however ancient, *do not go back to the respective authors* of those sacred writings. . . . That, however, *they do not go back to the first century* of the Christian era, or at least that *they are not original*, is a position generally held at the present day. . . . It thus appears that *the titles of the Gospels are not traceable to the Evangelists themselves.*" (*CE.* vi, 655, 656.) The very fact that the late second century Gospel-titles are of Gospels "according to" this or that alleged apostle, rather than "The Gospel *of* Mark" etc., is itself confession and plenary proof that "Mark," *et als.*, were not—and were not intended to be represented as—the real authors of those "according to" Gospels. The form of the titles to the Epistles—also later tagged to them,—as "The Epistle *of* St. Paul to the Romans," etc. makes this clear and convincing, that no Apostles wrote the "according to" Gospel-biographies of the Christ.

It is obvious, too, from an attentive reading of the Four Gospels, that they are not arranged in our present collection in their order of composition; "Matthew" certainly is not first in order, and is only put first because it begins with the "Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ." The Gospel "according to Mark" is now well established as the earliest of the first three, the "Synoptics," and "John" is clearly the latest. There has been much dispute on this point: "The ancient lists, versions, and ecclesiastical writings are far from being at one with regard to the order of these (4) sacred records of Christ's words and deeds. In early Christian literature the canonical *Gospels are given in no less than eight orders*, besides the one (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) with which we are familiar." (*CE.* vi, 657.)

Let us pause a moment to catch the full force of these admissions by *CE.* and note their consequences fatal to the pretense of Apostolic authorship or origin of these Gospels. We shall shortly see amplest proofs that none of the Four existed until well into the last half of the second century after so-called Christ and Apostles; but here we have, by clearest inference, an admission that the Gospels were not written by Apostles or their contemporaries. These titles "do not go back to the respective authors of those sacred writings; . . . do not go back to the first century; . . . are not original; . . . are not

traceable to the Evangelists." What an anomaly, in all literature! most especially in apostolic "sacred records of Christ's words and deeds"!

Here we have these wonderful and "only true" inspired writings of the companions of the Christ, eye-witnesses to his mighty career, written for the conversion and salvation of the world, floating around loose and anonymous for a century and a half, without the slightest indication of their divine source and sanction! All the flood of forged and spurious gospels, epistles, acts and revelations—"the apocryphal and pseudo-Biblical writings with which the East especially had been flooded" (*CE.* iii, 272), bore the names of the pretended writers, from the false Books of Adam and Enoch to the forged "Gospel of Jesus Christ" and the "Apocalypse of St. Peter." But the authentic and true Gospels of the genuine Apostles of Christ, are nameless and dateless scraps of papyrus! Imagine the great Fathers and Bishops of the Churches, the inspired and all-wise "Popes" of the Church at Rome, rising in their pulpits before the gaping Faithful; taking up an anonymous roll of manuscript, and announcing: "Our lesson today is from, (ahem!) one of the wonderful Gospels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but, (ahem!) I don't really know which one. It is by either Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or John, I'm sure; but the writer forgot to sign or insert his name. We will, however, worship God by reading it anonymously in faith. No, here is one with a name to it; we will now read from the inspired 'Gospel of Barnabas,' or the sacred 'Shepherd of Hermas.' Let us sing that grand and reassuring old Hymn, 'How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His wonderful Word!' Let us pray for more faith; and remember to believe what I have told you. *Ite, missa est*—It's all over, beat it!"

Books, evidently, do not go the rounds of readers nor of inspired Churches for over a century without a title or name. The first mention of the names or titles, as of the "Gospels" to which they were "supplied" was, as we shall see, not until about 185 A. D., when the "Gospels according to" the Four first appear in ecclesiastical literature, and thereupon began their career in the current use of the Churches, and therefore, evidently, then first came into existence. The Four Gospels thus, self-evidently, did not—could not for more than a century exist anonymous, without the Apostolic titles certifying their origin

and authenticity. To pretend otherwise is sheer deceit and false pretense.

THE "CANONICITY" OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

The only possible pretext whereby generations of men should be persuaded or cozened or compelled to accept and believe the Gospels (as well as the other N. T. books), even under the genial threat "he that believeth not shall be damned," is that these books were written by immediate companions and apostles of the Christ, faithful eyewitnesses to his work and word, commanded and inspired by Christ, God, or the Holy Ghost (which one is not explicit), to write and publish these wonderful biographies of the Christ. This is explicitly the teaching and dogma of the Church: no real Apostolic author, no true Gospel.

Through pious Christian fraud and forgery, there were fraudulently in vogue some couple of hundred "books current under an Apostle's name in the Early Church, such as the Epistle of Barnabas and the Apocalypse of St. Peter," as *CE.* (iii, 274) admits of these fraudulent "sacred writings"—*with* Apostolic titles. Our Ecclesiastical authority then states the "certain indubitable marks" whereby true Apostolic authenticity, essential to validity and credence, must be known: "For the primitive Church, *evangelical character* was the *test* of Scriptural sacredness. But to *guarantee* this character it was *necessary* that a book should *be known as composed* by the official witnesses and organs of the Evangel; hence to *certify the Apostolic authorship,* or at least *sanction,* of a work *purporting* to contain the Gospel of Christ." (*CE.* iii, 274.) All purported "Gospels" as to which Apostolic authorship or sanction could not be guaranteed and certified were, of course, spurious, as is natural and proper. Yet, for centuries, false and forged "Gospels," etc., as the two just named, bore the Apostolic certificates of authenticity—now confessed to be false.

THE "MARK" FABLE BELIES "CANONICITY"

The impossibility of the pretense that the precious Four Gospels circulated nondescript and anonymous in the Churches for a century and a half, is patently belied by the specific instance of the "Gospel

according to Mark," of which Gospel we have the precise "history" recorded three centuries after the alleged notorious event. Bishop Eusebius is our witness, in his celebrated Church History. He relates that Peter preached orally in Rome, Mark being his "disciple" and companion. The people wanted a written record of Peter's preachments, and (probably because Peter couldn't write), they importuned Mark to write down "that history which is called the Gospel according to Mark." Mark having done so, "the Apostle (Peter) having ascertained what was done by revelation of the Spirit, was *delighted* . . . and that history *obtained his authority* for the purpose of being read in the Churches." (*HE.* Bk. II, ch. 15.) Thus Peter was dead at the time, but his ghost got the news and somehow communicated its delight and approval for the document to be a "Gospel" for the Churches. But in a later section the Bishop gives another version: the people who heard Peter "requested Mark, who *remembered well* what he [Peter] had said, to reduce these things to writing. . . . Which, when Peter *understood*, he directly *neither hindered nor encouraged* it." (*HE.* Bk. VI, ch. 14.) Peter, thus, was alive, but wholly indifferent about his alleged Gospel.

The impossibilities of these contradictory fables need not detain us now. But both join in declaring that the "Gospel according to Mark" was publicly given to the Churches, at Rome, just before or after the death of Peter, 64–67 A. D. The moment, then, that this famous manuscript fell from the inspired pen—(but it was *not* inspired: Mark only "*remembered* well"),—the Great Seal of the Holy Ghost was upon it, and it bore before the world the notorious crown of Canonicity,—and this fact was of course known to all the Roman Church. And so, of course, of the other three; every papyrus containing these precious productions of Divine Inspiration must *ipso facto* be "canonized" and notoriously sacred and of Divine sanction from the very day they were written. Every Church, Father, Bishop, and Pope must certainly have known the fact, and have glorified in their precious possession.

But so it was—*not*. Pope Peter evidently did not and could not know it; he was "martyred in Rome" 64–67, the Church tells us; and the earliest date clerically claimed for "Mark" is some years after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The great Pope Clement I (died 97

A. D.?), first-to-fourth "successor" to Pope Peter, knew nothing of his great Predecessor's "Gospel according to Mark"; for, admits the *CE.*: "The New Testament he never quotes verbally. Sayings of Christ are now and then given, but not in the words of the Gospels. It cannot be proved, therefore, that he used any one of the Synoptic Gospels." (*CE.* iv, 14.) Of course, he did not, could not; they were not then written. And no other Pope, Bishop or Father (except Papias and until Irenæus), for nearly a century after "Pope Clement," ever mentions or quotes a Gospel, or names Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. So for a century and a half—until the books bobbed up in the hands of Bishop St. Irenæus and were tagged as "Gospels according to" this or that Apostle, there exists not a word of them in all the tiresome tomes of the Fathers. It is humanly and divinely impossible that the "Apostolic authorship" and hence "canonicity" or divine inspiration of these Sacred Four should have remained, for a century and a half, unknown and unsuspected by every Church, Father, Pope and Bishop of Christendom—if existent. Even had they been somewhat earlier in existence, never an inspired hint or human suspicion was there, that they were "Divine" or "Apostolic," or any different from the scores of "apocryphal or pseudo-Biblical writings with which the East especially had been flooded,"—that they were indeed "Holy Scripture." Hear this notable admission: "It was not until about the *middle of the second century* that under the rubric of *Scripture* the New Testament writings were assimilated to the Old"! (*CE.* iii, 275),—that is, became regarded as apostolic, sacred, inspired and canonical,—or "Scriptures."

To argue and prove that the Four *were* regarded as "Apostolic" and hence "canonical" *after* the middle of the second century, argues and proves that until that late date they were *not* so regarded,—which we have seen is impossible if they had been written by Apostles a hundred years and more previously and authorized by them "for the purpose of being read in the Churches," as the very ground and pillar of their foundation and faith.

Follow the proofs and argument of the Church to its own undoing: "From the testimony of St. Irenæus (A. D. 185) alone there can be no reasonable doubt that the Canon of the Gospel was inalterably fixed in the Catholic Church *by the last quarter of the second century* . . .

to the exclusion of any *pretended* Evangels. [Sundry writings mentioned] presuppose the authority enjoyed by the Fourfold Gospel *towards the middle of the second century*. . . . Even Rationalistic scholars like Harnack admit the canonicity of the quadriform Gospel between the years 140–175." (*CE.* iii, 275.) Even *CE.* does not prove or claim that it was any earlier; so here the Church and the Rationalists are in accord on this fatal fact! Certainly Popes Peter and Clement I, not to review the silent others, would have "inalterably fixed" the Divine Canonicity of the Four a century before, if they had known about these precious productions of the Apostles;—if, *in fact*, they had *existed*, the known works of Holy Apostles and apostolic men! But until "towards the middle of the second century" there was no "canon" or notion of divinely inspired Apostolic Gospels—simply for the reason that until just about that period they were not in existence.

The sudden appearance at a certain late date, of a previously unknown document, which is then attributed to an earlier age and long since dead writers, is one of the surest earmarks of forgery. Thus *CE.* speaking of another monumental Church forgery—(the "False Decretals" of Isidore, hereafter noticed)—urges this very fact as one of the most cogent grounds of the detection of that forgery: "These documents *appeared suddenly* in the ninth century and are *nowhere mentioned before that time*. . . . Then again there are endless anachronisms,"—just as in the Gospels and Epistles. (*CE.* vi, 773.) More ample and compelling proofs of this destroying fact will soon be made.

THE GOSPELS "ACCORDING TO" GREEK PRIESTS

According to the names "supplied" to the Four Gospels, as to the other New Testament books, the "Apostolic" authors were all of them Jews; the same is supposedly true of most of the now confessed apocrypha. All these were forgeries in the names of Jewish pseudo-apostles. But all of the Gospels, the other New Testament Books, and the forged apocrypha, were written in Greek. Self-evidently, these "ignorant and unlearned" peasant Apostles, speaking a vulgar Aramaic-Jewish dialect, could neither speak nor write Greek,—if they

could write at all. The Old Testament books were written mostly in Hebrew, which was a "dead language," which only the priests could read; thus in the synagogues of Palestine the rolls were read in Hebrew, and then "expounded" to the hearers in their Aramaic dialect. But these Hebrew "Scriptures" had been translated into Greek, in the famous Septuagint version which we have admired. Here is another significant admission by *CE.:* it speaks of "the supposed wholesale adoption and approval, by the Apostles, of the Greek, and therefore larger Old Testament," that is, the Greek version containing the Jewish apocrypha; and then admits the fact: "The New Testament undoubtedly shows a preference for the Septuagint; out of about 350 texts from the Old Testament [in the New], 300 favor the Greek version rather than the Hebrew." (*CE.* iii, 271.) It was also the Greek Septuagint and Greek forged Oracles, that were exclusively used by the Greek Fathers and priests in all the Gospel-propaganda work of the first three centuries. Obviously, the Gospels and other New Testament booklets, written in Greek and quoting 300 times the Greek Septuagint, and several Greek Pagan authors, as Aratus, and Cleanthes, were written, not by illiterate Jewish peasants, but by Greek-speaking ex-Pagan Fathers and priests far from the Holy Land of the Jews.

There is another proof that the Gospels were not written by Jews. Traditionally, Jesus and all the "Apostles" were Jews; all their associates and the people of their country with whom they came into contact, were Jews. But throughout the Gospels, scores of times, "the Jews" are spoken of, always as a distinct and alien people from the writers, and mostly with a sense of racial hatred and contempt. A few instances only can be given; they all betray that the writers were *not* Jews speaking of their fellow Jews. The Greek writer of "Matthew" says: "this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Mt. xxviii, 15),—showing, too, that it was written long afterwards; a Jew must have said "among our people," or some such. It is recorded by "Mark": "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding to the tradition of the elders" (Mk. vii, 3); no Jew writing for his fellow-Jews would explain or need to explain this Jewish custom, known to and practiced by "all the Jews." Luke names a Jew and locates geographically his place of

residence: "Joseph, of Arimathea, a city of the Jews"; an American writer, speaking of Hoboken, could not say "a city of the Americans"; nor did Jews need to be told by a Jew that Arimathea was a "city of the Jews." The Greek priest who wrote "John" is the most prolific in telling his Pagan readers about Jewish customs and personalities; absurd in a Jew writing for Jews: "After the manner of the purifying of the Jews" (ii, 6); "And the Jews' passover was at hand" (ii, 13); "Then answered the Jews, and said unto Jesus" (iii, 1); "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples—[all Jews]—and the Jews about purifying" (iii, 25); "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus" (v, 16); "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him" (v, 18). More: "And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" vi, 4); no American would say "the Fourth of July, a holiday of the Americans," though a French writer might properly so explain. "After these things Jesus would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him" (vii, 1); "for they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already" (ix, 22); "His disciples said unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee with stones" (xi, 8); "As the manner of the Jews is to bury" (xix, 40), which need be explained to no Jew. These and many like passages prove that no Jews wrote the Gospels; that they were written by foreigners for foreigners; these foreigners were Greek-speaking aliens unfamiliar with Jewish customs; the writers were therefore ex-Pagan Greek priests who were zealously "*selling*" the "*glad tidings of great joy*" to the ignorant and superstitious Pagan populace.

THE FOUR GOSPELS—"CHOSEN"

The Four Gospels are thus demonstrated as: not written by Jews; not written by any of the "Twelve Apostles"; not written nor in existence for over a century after the supposed Apostles. When finally the Gospel "according to" Luke came to be written, already, as "Luke" affirms, there were "many" other like pseudo-Apostolic Gospel-biographies of the Christ afloat (Luke, i, 1); he added just another. In his Commentary on Luke, Father Origen confirms this fact as well known: "And not four Gospels, but *very many*, out of which these *we have chosen* and delivered to the churches, we may perceive." (Origen, *In Proem. Luc.*, Hom. 1, vol. 2, p. 210.) How, and why, out of half a

hundred of other lying forgeries of Gospels, were these sacred Four finally "chosen" as truly "Apostolic," inspired, and canonical? Nobody knows, as *CE.* confesses.

It is a very strange and fatal confession, in view of the insistent false pretense of the Church for centuries of the patent Divinity of the Four Gospels, and of its own infallible inspiration and Divine guidance against all doubt and error; but it confesses:

"It is indeed impossible, at the present day, to describe the precise manner in which *out of the numerous works ascribed* to some Apostle, or simply bearing the name of *gospel,* only four, two of which are *not* ascribed to Apostles, *came to be considered* as sacred and canonical. It remains true, however, that *all the early testimony* which has a distinct bearing on the number of the canonical Gospels recognizes four such Gospels and none besides. Thus, Eusebius (d. 340) . . . Clement of Alexandria (d. about 220), . . . and Tertullian (d. 220), were familiar with our four Gospels, frequently quoting and commenting on them." (*CE.* vi, 657.)

The statement as to "*all* the early testimony" in favor of these Four only, is not only untrue, but it is contradicted by a true statement on the same page as the last above; it is, too, a further humiliating confession of blind and groping uncertainty with respect to the very foundation stones on which the Infallible Church is built, and makes a bit less confident the forged assurance that the Gates of Hell —to say nothing of human Reason—shall not yet prevail against the ill-founded structure. Here is the destructive admission:

"In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers one does *not,* indeed, meet with unquestionable evidence in favor of *only four* canonical gospels. . . . The canonical Gospels were *regarded* as of Apostolic authority, two of them being ascribed to the Apostles St. Matthew and St. John, respectively, and two to St. Mark and St. Luke, the respective companions of St. Peter and St. Paul. *Many other gospels* indeed *claimed Apostolic authority,* but to none of them was this claim *universally allowed* in the early Church. The only *apocryphal work* which was at all *generally received, and relied upon,* in addition to our four canonical Gospels, is the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews.' It is a well-known fact that St. Jerome regards it as the Hebrew original of our Greek Canonical Gospel according to St. Matthew." (*CE.* vi, 657.)

Thus, admittedly, "numerous works" of pretended and false "gospels," some fifty, were forged and falsely "ascribed to some apostle"

by devout Christians; after a century and a half only four "came to be considered" and were finally "chosen"—selected—as of divine utterance and sanction. Why? one may well wonder.

WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

Why Four Gospels, then,—when only one would have been aplenty and much safer, as fewer contradictions—out of the fifty ascribed by pious forging hands to the Holy Twelve? The pious Fathers are ready here, as ever, with fantastic reasons to explain things whereof they are ignorant or are not willing to give honest reasons for. "The saintly Bishop of Lyons," says *CE.* with characteristic clerical solemnity when anyone else would laugh, "Irenæus (died about 202), who had known Polycarp in Asia Minor, not only admits and quotes our four Gospels, [he is the *very first* to mention them!]—but argues that there must be just four, no more and no less. He says: 'It is not possible that the Gospels be either more or fewer than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout the world, . . . and the pillar and ground of the Church is the Gospel, . . . it is fitting that we should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side and vivifying our flesh. . . . The living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by our Lord"! (*CE.* vi, 659.) Thus far *CE.* quoting the good Bishop; but we may follow the Bishop a few lines further in his very innocent ratiocinations from ancient Hebrew mythology, in proof of the divine Four:

"For this reason were four principal covenants given to the human race: One prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly Kingdom. . . . But that these Gospels alone are true and reliable, and admit neither an increase nor diminution of the aforesaid number, I have proved by so many and such arguments. For, since God made all things in due proportion and adaptation, it was fit also that the outward aspect of the Gospel should be well arranged and harmonized. The opinion of those men, therefore, who handed the Gospel down to us, having been investigated, from their very fountainheads, let us proceed also [to the remaining apostles], and in-

quire into their doctrine with regard to God." (Iren. *Adv. Hær.* III, xi, 8, 9; *ANF.* i, 428–29.)

The true reason, however, for four finally "chosen" and accepted Gospels, is that stated by Reinach, after quoting Irenæus and other authorities: "The real reason was *to satisfy each of the four principal Churches each of which possessed its Gospel:* Matthew at Jerusalem, Mark at Rome, or Alexandria, Luke at Antioch, and John at Ephesus." (Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 217.) This reason for the use of a different Gospel by each of the principal and independent Churches,—for the special uses of each of which the respective Gospels were no doubt worked up by forging Fathers in each Fold,—is confirmed by Bishop Irenæus himself in this same argument. Each of the four principal sects of heretics, he says, makes use in their Churches of one or the other of these Four for its own uses, for instance: Matthew by the Ebionites; Mark by "those who separate Jesus from Christ"; Luke by the Marcionites; and John by the Valentinians; and this heretical use of the Four, argues the Bishop, confirms their like acceptance and use by the True Churches: "So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics bear witness to them, and starting from these documents, each of them endeavors to establish his own peculiar doctrine—[citing the use by each sect of a different Gospel as above named]. Since, then, our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these documents, our proof derived from them is firm and true." (Iren., *op. cit.* sec. 7.) The "canonical Four," verily, as *CE.* confesses, were manufactured precisely for the purpose of meeting and confuting the heretics, as were the gradually developed and defined sacred dogmas of the Orthodox Church, even that of the Trinity. The fabrication of the Four can be seen working out under our very eyes, in the light of the foregoing statement of Irenæus, and of that of *CE.* to be quoted.

In the next section we shall see proven, that no written Gospels existed until shortly before 185 A. D., when Irenæus wrote; they are *first mentioned* in chapter xxii of his Book II; the above quotation is from Book III, when use of them became constant. Evident we see it to be, from what Irenæus has just said, that the sects of heretics named were making use, each of them of one of the just-published

Four as well as of other "spurious gospels"; the Orthodox claimed the Four as their own, and finally established the claim. The "gospel" up to about this time, a century and a half after Jesus Christ, was entirely *oral* and "traditional"; the Gnostics and other heretics evidently were first to reduce some "gospels" to writing; the Orthodox quickly followed suit, in order to combat the heretics by "apostolic" writings. This is clear from the following, that "the spurious gospels of the Gnostics prepared the way for the canon of Scripture,"—meaning, for the now "canonical Scripture"; for, as the "canon" was not dogmatically established until 1546, the Four were not "canonized" when Irenæus wrote in 185,—when the "way was prepared" for them by the earlier heretical "spurious gospels." Thus *CE.* writes:

"The endless controversies with heretics have been indirectly the cause of most important doctrinal developments and definitions formulated by councils to the edification of the body of Christ. Thus the spurious gospels of the Gnostics *prepared the way* for the canon of Scripture: the Patripassian, Sabellian, Arian, and Macedonian heresies drew out a clearer concept of the Trinity; the Nestorian and Eutychian errors led to definite dogmas on the nature and Person of Christ. And so on down to Modernism, which has called forth a solemn assertion of the claims of the supernatural in history." (*CE.* vii, 261.)

Heresy means "Choice"; heretics are those who choose what they will believe, or whether they will believe at all. It was to foreclose all choice on the part of believers, that the divinely-inspired, apostolic fictions of the Four Gospels were drawn up for the first time to combat the "spurious gospels" of the free choosers. Heresy could not exist in the time of Jesus Christ, for *he laid down nothing for belief*, except "He that believeth on *me* shall be saved" against his immediate "second coming" and end of the world. The gospels are thus anti-heretical documents of the second century, after Gnosticism first appeared.

In this connection it may be mentioned, as complained by Augustine, that there were some 93 sects of heretics during the first three centuries of the Christian Faith; all these were Christian sects, believing in the tales of Jesus Christ and him crucified, but each of them as rivals struggling for the profits and power of religion and warring to suppress all others and make itself master in pelf and power. Hence

the Fathers thundered against the heretics. The inspired Four Gospels, contradictory at every point, were impossible to believe in all points; they left every one free to disbelieve all, or to believe such as he could.

So incredible, even on their face, were one and all of these canonical Four Gospels, that the fanatic Father Tertullian thus stated the grounds of his holy faith in them: "*Credo quia incredibilis est*—I believe because it is unbelievable"; and St. Augustine, greatest of the Fathers, declared himself in these terms: "*Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoveret Auctoritas. . . . Ego me ad eos teneam, quibus præcipientibus Evangelio credidi*—I would not believe the Gospel true, unless the authority of the Catholic Church constrained me. . . . I hold myself bound to those, through whose teachings I have believed the Gospel." (Augustine, *On the Foundation*, sec. 5, Ed. Vivès, vol. xxv, p. 435; *Orpheus*, p. 223.)

In the work often cited, Bishop Irenæus either falsely quotes the Gospel of Mark, or the sacred text has been seriously altered in our present copies; he says: "Mark commences with a reference to the prophetical spirit, saying, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet' " (sec. 8, p. 428), as if Isaiah testified to the Gospel. The Bishop also quotes two long passages, one a written letter of the Apostles "unto those brethren from among the Gentiles who are in Antioch, and Syria, and Silicia, greeting,"—which are not in the Acts of the Apostles or any other New Testament book as we now have them. (Iren., *Adv. Hær.* III, xi, 14; p. 436.) The good Bishop seems either to have fabricated this alleged Epistle and passage, or other pious hands falsified the sacred Scriptures by forging them out of its pages. So it is evident that these inspired booklets, as we now know them, at least differ in very many material respects from the "traditional Gospel" and from the form in which the Four Gospels were first reduced to writing. Many other instances exist, of which some of the most notorious will be shown in the course of the chapter.

INSPIRATION AND PLAGIARISM

In this connection a few words may be said as to the chronological order and manner of composition of the first three or Synoptic Gos-

pels. "Historically Mark is the earliest, and its study the foundation of critical enquiry. But the ordinary Christian is not a historical critic." (*New Commentary*, Pt. III, p. 126; cf. pp. 33, 45.) With the latter statement all will agree; with the first *CE.* is in agreement with the leading critics, though holding to the exploded "tradition" that one Mark wrote "Mark," or, in its words: "*If*, then, a consistent and widespread early *tradition* is to count for anything, St. Mark *wrote a work* based upon St. Peter's Preaching." (*CE.* ix, 676.) The later writers of "Matthew" and "Luke" copied bodily from "Mark," with the utmost literality in many places, but with the greatest freedom of changes, additions and suppressions at others, to suit their own purposes. But one comparison, that between "Mark" and "Matthew," can here be given; the method extends quite as notably to "Luke." Thus *CE.* discloses the process: "Mark is found *complete* in Matthew, with the exception of numerous slight omissions and the following pericopes. . . . In all, 31 verses are omitted"; and so with respect to the "analogies" with the other two. "Parts peculiar to Matthew are numerous, as Matthew has 330 verses that are distinctly his own." (*CE.* x, 60, 61; cf. for thorough examination, *New Comm.* Pt. III, pp. 33, *seq.*) "These 'Matthean additions,' as they are called, . . . *seem* to be authentic when they relate our Lord's words; but, when they relate incidents, they are *extremely questionable.*" (*New Comm.* Pt. III, p. 127–128.)

We have just seen the same authority admit the want of authenticity of one set of words imputed by Matthew to his Lord; our next section will demonstrate another famous "Matthean addition" to be a gross and bungling forgery. This bodily copying from Mark, with so many "additions and suppressions," implies, as we have seen, "a very free treatment of the text of Mark in Matthew and Luke (a freedom which reaches a climax in the treatment of Mk. x, 17f. in Mt. xix, 16f.). . . . Just as the latter (Matthew) *tampered* more with the Markan order than St. Luke did." (*New Comm.* Pt. III, 36, 40.) But this textual tampering is well explained, for clerical apologists: "Nor need such freedom surprise us. Mark, at the time when the others used it, *had not attained anything like the status of Scripture*, and an evangelist using it would feel free, or might indeed feel bound, to *bring its*

contents into line with the traditions of the particular Church in which he lived and worked"! (*Ib.* p. 36.)

This perfectly confirms the position taken in the section "Why Four Gospels?" that these Gospels were framed up each in a different Church, to meet its own uses and special purposes, and in answer to the "gospels" of the Heretics. "Mark," being first in order, was probably in the hands of several Churches, some of whose "traditions" did not accord with the "gospel" narratives therein retailed; the local gospel-mongers, therefore, taking "Mark" as good "copy" for a start, took their blue-pencil styluses in hand and "edited" its text by profuse "tampering" until they produced, severally, the "gospels according to" Matthew and Luke, for use in more "orthodox" and approved form according to the local traditions. The "John" gospel-fabrication alone of the Four quite disregarded the "Mark" document, and is in the most complete contradiction with it, and with all the first three. The "Big Four" gradually won their way against and were "chosen" from all the other fifty or more in circulation, which then became "apocrypha," or admitted forgeries.

GOSPELS LATE FORGERIES

We have seen the admissions of *CE.* that the earliest notice of the Four Gospels now known to us was towards the close of the second century, quoting as the *earliest witnesses* the African Bishops, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, both of whom died about 220 A. D. It presents, however, one earlier witness to Gospels going in the name of the Four: "Irenæus, in his work *Against Heresies* (A. D. 182–188), testified to the existence of a Tetramorph, or Quadriform Gospel, given by the Word and unified by one Spirit," (*CE.* iii, 275),—of which we have just had occasion to admire his quaint and cogent proofs. This first mention, by Irenæus, of Four Gospels, with the names of their supposed writers, we shall in a moment quote; first we will get the record in honest and correct form by citing an even earlier partial naming of something like Gospels, and their reputed writers.

1. Bishop Papias, about 145 A. D., is the very first namer of some-

thing like written "Gospels" and writers; and this is what he says, quoting his anonymous gossipy old friends, the presbyters:

"And the presbyter said this. MARK having become the interpreter of PETER, wrote down accurately whatsoever he *remembered.* It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor accompanied him. . . . For one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements. MATTHEW put the Oracles (of the Lord) *in the Hebrew language,* and each one interpreted them as best he could." (Papias, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii, 39; *ANF.* i, 154–5.)

Here, then, over one hundred years after Christ, we have *the first mention* of written gospels and of Mark, and the recital, by hearsay on hearsay, that he wrote down "whatsoever he *remembered*" that Peter had said the Lord had said and done. This is rather a far cry from divine inspiration of inerrant truth in this first hearsay by memory recital of the supposed Gospel-writers. Thus "Mark" is admittedly *not* "inspired," but is hearsay, haphazard "traditions," pieced together a generation and more afterwards by some unknown priestly scribe. But note well, even if Mark may have written some things, alleged as retailed by Peter, yet this is not, and is not an intimation even remotely, that this by-memory record of Mark is the "Gospel according to Mark" which half a century after Papias came to be known. Indeed, such an idea is expressly excluded; Mark's notes were "not in exact order," but here and there, as remembered; while the "Gospel according to Mark" is, or purports to be, very orderly, proceeding from "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" orderly and consecutively through to his death, resurrection and ascension. It includes the scathing rebuke administered by the Christ to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God" (Mk. viii, 33); one may be sure that Peter never related these eminently deserved "sayings of Christ" to Mark or to anyone.

Moreover, the present "Gospel according to Mark" relates the crucifixion of Jesus at about thirty years of age, after one year's ministry; which is wholly false, as Jesus died at home in bed of old age, in effect says Bishop Papias, on the "tradition" of these same presbyters. So, every other consideration here aside, Papias is not a witness to "The Gospel according to Mark." As for Matthew, Papias

simply reports the elders as saying that Matthew wrote down the "ORACLES" or *words* of the Lord, and in Hebrew; the "Gospel according to Matthew" is much more than mere "words of the Lord"; it is the longest and most palpably fictitious of the "Lives" of the Christ; it was written in Greek, and very obviously by a Greek priest or Father, many years after the reputed time of Jesus Christ. And Bishop Papias, more than a century after Christ, did not have in his important church, and had never seen, these alleged apostolic writings, and only knew of some such by the gossip of the elders at second or third hand. So we must count Papias out as a witness for these two of our written Gospels. None of the present Four Gospels was thus in existence in about A. D. 145. And it is obvious that, even by "tradition," the Gospels in the names of Luke and John did not exist in the time of Papias.

2. Justin Martyr (145–149) quotes sundry "sayings" of Jesus which we find here and there in the present Four,—just as like alleged "sayings" identically are to be found in almost any of the confessedly forged or apocryphal gospels; but he names no names nor Gospels, but only says "memoires of the apostles," or simply "it is said." (See all instances cited, in *EB.* ii, 1819.) So Justin is no witness to our present Four Gospels, which evidently did not exist in his time about 150 years after Jesus Christ,—though he assiduously quotes the Sibyl and the heathen gods as proofs of Jesus Christ, as we have seen.

3. Irenæus (182–188) makes the very first mention of Four Gospels and names the reputed authors. These are textually the interesting, and as we shall see, at least in part, spurious words of Bishop Irenæus:

"Matthew also issued a Gospel—[see it grow—Papias said only "oracles of the Lord"] among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia." (Iren. *Adv. Hær.* Bk. III, Ch. 1, i; *ANF.* i, 414.)

Irenæus, therefore, about the year 185 of our Lord, to use a medium date, or some one hundred and fifty years after his death, is the first of all the zealous Christ-bearers to record the fact that, at the time he wrote, there were in existence four wonderful biographies or histories of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, two under the names of holy Apostles, and, he "implies that the Gospels of Mark and Luke were, in effect, apostolic, as being written by companions of Peter and Paul." (*EB.* i, 1830.) If any such apostolic and authentic works had been in existence before the years, we will say, 150–180 A.D., it is beyond comprehension and possibility that the zealous Fathers, who so eagerly quoted, and misquoted, the Old Testament and its apocrypha, the forged New Testament apocrypha, and the heathen Oracles, in proof of their Christ, should have been silent as clams about the apostolic Jesus-histories "according to" Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Even all the later Fathers, and ecclesiastical writers, and the *CE.*, admittedly are unable to trace their genealogy further back into "the age of apocryphal literature" than about 150 A. D. or later. It is impossible, therefore, to believe or to pretend, that these Four Gospels were written by apostles and their personal disciples, some hundred years and more before they were ever heard of by the zealous and myth-mongering Fathers. A confused medley of alleged words and wonderful deeds of the Christ, handed down by ancient tradition or new-invented for any occasion, existed in oral "tradition," and were worn threadbare by rote repetition; but never a written word of the Four for a century and a half after the apostles had their say, and had handed down that wonderful and inexhaustible "Deposit of Faith," which, oral and unedited, is yet drawn upon until this day by the inspired Successors of Peter for their every new Dogma.

One may turn the thousands of pages of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* before Irenæus in vain to find a direct word of quotation from written Gospels, nor (except as above recorded) even bare mention of the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, as writers of Gospels. The above words of Irenæus are registered in his Book III, chapter i; in the first two Books, while, like Justin, he quotes "sayings" which are to be found in our present texts, as in the apocryphas, he does not mention "Gospel" or any of the four reputed evangelists, until chapter xxii of Book II, where he mentions the word "Gospels" and those

of John and Luke, and assails their record of the early death of Jesus as "heresy." But beginning with chapter x of Book III, he bristles with the names of and direct quotations from all Four; and so with all the following Fathers. It seems, therefore, a fair inference that Irenæus had just heard of these Four Gospels at the time the last chapters of the second of the two Books were composed; and that they came into existence, or to his knowledge, just before the time he began to compose Book III. And certainly these Four Gospels could not have been in existence and circulation very long before they would come to the eager hands of the active and prolific Bishop of Lyons, who had recently come from the tutelage of his friend Polycarp,—"disciple of the Apostle John"—venerable Bishop of Smyrna, who sent him to Lyons, and who, for his part, shows not a suspicion of knowledge of them. And these Gospels, just now come into existence, were immediately and fiercely attacked by Bishop Irenæus as false and "heresy" in the vital points of the crucifixion and early death of Jesus, who, says the Bishop, lived to very old age, even maybe till the times of Trajan, 98–117, as vouched for by the Apostle John and other apostles and by the [oral] "Gospel." This, too, casts discredit on these Gospels as containing authentic record of the apostolic "traditions," condemned in this vital particular by the only two Bishops, Papias and Irenæus, who—for a century and a half—mention any Gospel-writings at all.

"LUKE" DISCREDITS APOSTOLICITY

Moreover, at the time that the Gospel bearing the name of Luke was published, already many Gospels or purported histories and sayings of Jesus Christ were in active circulation: "Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it has seemed to me good *also*, having had a perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (Luke, i, 1–4). Now, these "many" Gospels were clearly not by any of the apostles, else Luke would certainly have so stated; they were *not*

"inspired" writings, but they were by sundry anonymous "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word"; they are either totally lost to posterity, or are among the fifty admittedly forged and apocryphal Gospels which we have previously noticed. Thus we see two of the "Four," *i. e.*, "Mark," and "Luke" are, on their face, *uninspired*, hearsay, and long *ex post facto*.

That neither apostle nor contemporary of Jesus wrote a line of "gospel" is thus perfectly evidenced by Luke: "According to the prologue of Luke, no eye-witness of the life of Jesus took pen in hand—none at least appear to have produced any writings which Luke would have called a 'narrative.'" (*EB.* ii, 1892.) These conclusions are confirmed by the learned clerical translators and editors of the *ANF*, respectively, as follows:

"Though a few of the Apocryphal Gospels are of comparatively early origin, *there is no evidence that any Gospels purporting to be what our Four Gospels are, existed in the first century,* or that any other than fragmentary literature of this character existed even in the second century." (Ed. note to Apocrypha of the New Testament, *ANF.* viii, 349.)—"There is abundant evidence of the existence of many of these *traditions* in the second century, though it cannot be made out that any of the books were then in existence in their present form." (Translator's Introductory Notice to Apocryphal Gospels. *ANF.* viii, 351.)

Such apocryphal gospels would naturally contain—as they do—many of the same reputed words and deeds of the Christ as those now reported by Luke and the others; many are indeed in large sections in the very same words. Luke does not say or imply that these "many" were false, but, on the contrary, being by alleged "eye-witnesses" they were necessarily more or less the same things which Luke undertook, not to belie or correct, but simply to repeat in good order for the edification of his friend Theophilus. It is very significant, for the date of the authorship of "Luke," to note the fact that the only Theophilus known to early Church history is a certain ex-Pagan by that name, who, after becoming Christian, and very probably before being instructed in the certainty of the faith by "Luke," himself turned Christian instructor and Father, and wrote the Tract, in three Books, under the title *Epistle to Antolychus*, preserved in the Collection of Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. ii, pp. 89–121. This Theophilus became

Bishop of Antioch about 169–177 A. D. (*CE.* xiv, 625); and thus illuminates the date of "Luke."

That these Four Gospels, then, are forgeries, falsely ascribed to Apostles and their companions, a century and a half after Christ and the apostles, and were compounded of very conflicting "traditions" and out of the existing 50 or more forgeries circulating in apostolic names—is proven as positively as negative proofs permit, and "beyond a reasonable doubt"—which is proof ample for conviction of capital crime.

Most people, says Bishop Papias, took pleasure in "voluminous falsehoods" in reporting or writing of Jesus Christ and his life and deeds, for which reason, says the Bishop, he was driven to "the living voice of tradition" for his own accounts,—samples of which we have seen. These fanciful and distorted oral traditions, finally reduced into some fifty fantastic written records of "voluminous falsehoods," were later, about the time of Book III of Bishop Irenæus, crystallized into four documents, one each of which was held by one of the principal churches as its authoritative biography of the Christ, or "gospel"; to which, the titles "According to" Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, were tacked for pretended apostolic sanction.

The truth of the late second century origin of the Gospels and Epistles may be garnered from the guarded words of a standard theological textbook on Christian Evidences: "The Christian literature which has survived from the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second is scanty and fragmentary—[which could not be true if the Gospels and Epistles had then existed]. But when we come into the light of the *last quarter of the second century*, we find the *Gospels of the canon* in undisputed possession of the field." (*The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, by George Parker Fisher, D.D., LL.D.; 1902.)

Summarizing the results of critical study of the four Gospels, upon *all* the evidences, internal and external, which are there fully reviewed, the conclusions of modern Biblical scholarship are thus recorded by the *Encyclopedia Biblica:*

As to *Matthew:* "The employment of various sources, the characteristic difference of the quotations from the LXX (Septuagint) and the original (Hebrew), the indefiniteness of the determinations of time and place, the

incredibleness of the contents, the introduction of later conditions, as also the artificial arrangement, and so forth, have long since led to the conclusion that for the authorship of the first Gospel the apostle Matthew must be given up." (*EB.* ii, 1891.)

As to *Mark:* "According to Papias, the second gospel was written by Mark. . . . In what Papias says the important point is not so much the statement that Mark wrote the gospel as the further statement that Peter supplied the contents orally. . . . The supposition that the gospel is essentially a repetition of oral communications by Peter, will at once fall to the ground. . . . Should Mark have written in Aramaic, then he cannot be held to have been the author of canonical Mark, which is certainly not a translation, nor yet, in view of the LXX quotations which have passed over into all three gospels, can he be held to have been the author of the original Mark." (*EB.* ii, 1891.)

As to *Luke:* "This tradition [that Luke was the author of the third gospel and of Acts] cannot be traced farther back than towards the end of the second century (Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and the Muratorian fragment). . . . It has been shown that it is impossible to regard Luke with any certainty as the writer even of the 'we' sections of Acts, not to speak of the whole book of Acts, or of the Third Gospel. . . . If Luke cannot have been the author of Acts, neither can he have been the author of the Third Gospel." (*EB.* ii, 1893, 2831.)

As to *John:* "No mention of the Fourth Gospel which we can recognize as such carries us further than to 140 A. D. As late as 152, Justin, who nevertheless lays so great value upon the 'Memorabilia of the Apostles,' regards John—if indeed he knows it at all—with distrust, and appropriates from it a very few sayings. . . . If on independent grounds some period shortly before 140 A. D. can be set down as the approximate date of the production of the gospel [a certain statement in it is explained]. . . . The Apostolic authorship of the gospel remains impossible, and that not merely from the consideration that it cannot be the son of Zebedee who has introduced himself as writer in so remarkable a fashion, but also from the consideration that it cannot be an eye-witness of the facts of the life of Jesus who has presented, as against the synoptists, an account so much less credible, nor an original apostle who has shown himself so readily accessible to Alexandrian and Gnostic ideas, nor a contemporary of Jesus who survived so late into the second century and yet was capable of composing so profound a work." (*EB.* ii, 2550, 2553.)

None of these Four Gospels, then, being of apostolic authorship or even of the apostolic age, but anonymous productions of over a century after the apostles, all are exactly of like origin and composition as all the other fifty apocryphal Jesus-writings: the Four "do not, in

point of fact, rest upon any real difference *in the character or origin* of the writings concerned," from all the other fifty admittedly apocryphal and forged gospels dating about the middle of the second century, at the height of the Christian age of apocryphal literature. They are therefore late Christian forgeries of the Catholic Church.

FORGERIES IN THE FORGED GOSPELS

That the Four Gospels, as we have them, are very late productions, issued in the names of apostles a century and more dead, and are therefore forgeries, is now proven beyond peradventure. That they are not, even in the form that Bishop Irenæus first knew them, each the work of one inspired mind and pen, is as readily and conclusively provable. They are, each and all Four, clumsy compilations framed by different persons and at very different times, as is patent on their face; they are thus concatenations of forgeries within forgeries. This we shall now demonstrate.

The Church claims these Four Gospels to be apostolic and divine works, and together with all the other books of the Trentine Bible, to be throughout divinely inspired, having God himself for their Author. This 1546 Dogma of the Infallible Church has been thus reaffirmed by the Sacred Vatican Council (A. D. 1870):

"These books are sacred and canonical because they contain revelation without error, and because, written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their Author." (*CE.* ii, 543.)

More recently, Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Prov. Deus.* (1893), thus reaffirms the plenary inspiration and inerrancy of Holy Writ:

"It will never be lawful to restrict inspiration merely to certain portions of the Holy Scriptures, or to grant that the sacred writers *could have made a mistake.* . . . They render in exact language, with *infallible truth,* all that God commanded, and nothing else"! (*Ib.*)

For the Protestant sects the notion of divine inspiration and inerrant truth of Scripture—excepting always the dozen and more of Old Testament "apocryphal" Books and parts, as *Tobias* and the history of the Assyrian great god *Bel and the Dragon,*—a typical

profession is that of the first Article of the Baptist Declaration of Faith: "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, . . . and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction. . . . It has God for its Author, and truth without any admixture of error for its matter."

All this priestly "confidence stuff" must remind one of what Cicero said of the Roman augurs. Even *CE.*, valiant but often perplexed defender of the orthodox Faith, can not give full credit to that inspired canard, which even the infallible authors of it could not have themselves believed. Timorously "reasoning in chains" and minimizing the truth, the orthodox apologist, forced by scholarly criticism, confesses—utterly belying Council and Holiness:

> "In *all the Bible,* where the same event is several times narrated by the same writer, or narrated by several writers, there is some slight [*sic*] divergency, as it is natural there should be with those who spoke or wrote *from memory.* Divine inspiration covers the substance of the narration." (*CE.* i, 122.)

Those sacred writers, putting on papyrus rolls from errant and therefore necessarily uninspired "memory," their intimate familiarities with the thoughts and desires, purposes and providences of God, make not "some slight divergencies" from accurate recording of the promptings of the Spirit to them; they committed incessant contradictions of so gross a nature as to impeach and destroy the possibility of truth and credibility of virtually every word they said or wrote "in all the Bible," Old and New Testaments alike. I have so fully exposed some thousands of these glaring and self-destroying contradictions in my previous work, that here I simply notice only those most vital ones which are pertinent and incidental to our present subject of apostolic forgeries.

In a work accompanying the Revised Version of the Bible, in which the Revisers pointed out some 30,000 (now over 150,000) variant readings in the New Testament, the reverend author makes this naïve explanation: "In regard to the New Testament, no miracle has been wrought to preserve the text as it came from the pens of the inspired writers. That would have been a thing altogether out of harmony with God's method of governing the world"! (Dr. Alex. Roberts, *Companion to the Revised Version,* p. 4.) One may wonder at the writer's

intimacy with God's governmental methods, as well as at God's indifference to the preservation of his miraculously-revealed Holy Word, so awfully necessary to save us from eternal damnation; when, as we shall see, by special miraculous intervention and providence he has, the Church vouches, preserved wholly "incorrupt" through the Ages of Faith countless whole cadavers and ghastly scraps and miraculous relics galore of the unwashed Saints of Holy Church.

CONTRADICTIONS AND TRUTH

No more compelling proofs of forgery in a document can well be than glaring contradictions between two parts of the text. Remember that in the "age of apocryphal literature" there were no printed books, thus fixing the text, and no "copyright" existed. All books, sacred and profane, were manuscripts, tediously written by hand on rolls of papyrus or sheets of parchment-skin; like the manuscripts of the Gospels, Epistles, etc., they were usually unsigned and undated, and frequently gave no clue to the anonymous writers. When one man came into possession of a manuscript which he desired, he sat down and copied it by hand, or employed slaves or professional copyists to do the labor. There was absolutely no check against errors of copying, or intentional omissions, alterations or insertions into the text, to suit the taste or purpose of the copyist. Religious books were written, and copied, by priests, monks or Fathers; religious notions and doctrines were very diversely held, and developed or were modified incessantly. Traditions of what was said or done by Jesus Christ and the apostles were, we have seen, very variant and conflicting. Very often, as we shall see, conflicting traditions or accounts are found in the same book. As no honest writer of intelligence and care would put into one short work which he is writing, two totally contradictory statements regarding the same fact, the only way in which such contradictions can occur in what purports to be an original or genuine manuscript, is by the intentional insertion by a later copyist of the new and contradictory material, euphoniously called "interpolations" (*CE.* iv, 498, *post*),—without the critical sense to perceive the contradiction, and omit the original statement with which his addition conflicts.

Father Tertullian, in his work *Against Heresies*, denying that Christians do such things—do not need to, he says, because the Scriptures are favorable to the Orthodox,—accuses the Heretics of such practices, and naïvely explains how such interpolations or forgeries of text are done, and why they needs must be:

"All interpolation must be believed to be a later process. . . . One man perverts the Scriptures with his hand, another their meaning by his exposition. . . . Unquestionably, the Divine Scriptures are more fruitful in resources of all kinds for this sort of facility [of introducing interpolations]. Nor do I risk contradiction in saying that the very Scriptures were even arranged by the will of God in such a manner as to furnish materials for heretics, inasmuch as I read that 'there must be heresies' (I Cor. xi, 19), which there cannot be without Scriptures"! (*Praes.* xxxviii–xxxix; *ANF.* iii, 262.) Speaking of instances related to the birth of Jesus Christ, *EB.* makes a remark, which it extends to others, and is generally applicable to the conflicting Gospel narratives:

"From the nature of the case both canonical narratives were accepted by faith and incorporated with each other. *The gospels themselves supply ample justification of a criticism of the gospel narratives.* In spite of *all the revisions which the gospels received before they became canonically fixed,* they still not unfrequently preserve references to conditions which are irreconcilable with the later additions." (*EB.* iii, 3343, 3344.)

"For Christian orthodoxy," says the same authority, "reconcilability of the two canonical accounts was always a necessary dogma"; and on this point, the orthodox *CE.* makes a quaint but typically clerical argument, in effect that the confessed contradictions of Holy Writ make it all the more credible: "As can readily be seen, variations are naturally to be expected in four distinct, and in many ways independent, accounts of Christ's words and deeds, so that their presence, instead of going against, rather makes for the substantial value of the evangelical narratives"! (*CE.* vi, 659.) Fanciful and disingenuous as this is, and derogatory of the Papal theory that it is *not possible* that "the sacred writers could have made a mistake," the argument loses even its rhetorical force when we find the most monumental contradictions in the inspired words of the same

writer in the same inspired little book. We will notice some of the most obvious and fatal forgeries by "interpolations" into the Gospel Christ-tales.

JESUS—MAN OR GOD?

The Jews, in their "canonical," more definitely in their apocryphal or admittedly forged Scriptures, expected a "Messiah," or anointed King of the race and lineage of David, who should deliver them from the rule of their enemies,—at the time of the Gospel tales, the Romans; previously, the Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks, successively. This King, says Isaiah, shall sit and reign "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it" (Isa. ix, 7); and that this prophecy was in order of fulfillment, Gabriel the Angel announced to Mary the Ever-Virgin Mother of eight sons and daughters: "Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." (Lk. i, 32, 33.) There is not a word of "prophecy" anywhere that this King should be divine, a Son of the God of Israel; he was to be a human king of the house of Jacob, of David. There were many false pretenders to the still vacant Messiahship, and even Jesus was not the last to proclaim himself the Messiah or Christ: "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." (Mt. xxiv, 4, 23, 24; Mk. xiii, 6, 21, 22.)

That this Messiah Jesus who was come was mere man, but instinct with the spirit of God, is positively avowed by both Peter and Paul. Says Peter in his first sermon at Pentecost: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, *a man* approved of God among you [etc.]. The patriarch David. . . .therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had *sworn with an oath* to him, that *of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh*, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne." (Acts, ii, 22, 29, 30.) And Paul: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii, 5); and again: "Jesus Christ of the seed of David" (2 Tim. ii, 8). Therefore, in the times when the two cited sacred books were, by whomever, written, Jesus was at that time regarded simply as a man, a "son" or descendant of David. So, when, many years later, the Gos-

pels "according to" Matthew and Luke came to be by whomever written, in their original form Jesus Christ was mere man.

Matthew's first chapter begins very humanly and explicitly: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham"; and Matthew gives an unbroken line of human begettings, father of son, until "And *Jacob* begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ"! (Matt. i, 1–16.) And Matthew names and catalogues twenty-eight generations between David and Jesus, to-wit: David, *Solomon* . . . *Jacob*, Joseph,—Jesus, —a purely human ancestry. Also Luke still reflected the belief, held at the time he wrote, that Jesus was of human ancestry; he gives his human genealogy all the way back to Adam, and through many mythical patriarchs who assuredly never existed. This human genealogy by Luke vastly differs, however, from that of Matthew; instead of twenty-eight generations from David, through *Solomon* . . . *Jacob* and Joseph, our Luke genealogist makes out in detail forty-two generations, to wit: *David, Nathan,* . . . *Heli,* Joseph, Jesus; and only three of the intermediate names are the same in the two lists. So one or the other of the two inspired genealogies is fictitious, false and forged, necessarily: both are, of course, if Jesus was *not* the son of David, but the immediate "Son of God." The truth is thus stated: "The genealogy could not have been drawn up *after Joseph ceased to be regarded as the real father of Jesus.*" (*EB.* iii, 2960.)

And *CE.* thus scraps the inspired genealogy of Luke: "*The artificial character of Luke's genealogy* may be seen in the following table [copying Luke's list] . . . The artificial character" is shown by details cited. (*CE.* vi, 411.) It also explodes the seventeenth century clerical pretense,—heard often today—in attempted explanation of these glaring contradictions, that one or the other of these sacred genealogies, preferably that of Luke, was the genealogy, not of Joseph, but of Mary: "It may be safely said that patristic tradition does not regard St. Luke's list as representing the genealogy of the Blessed Virgin." (*CE.* vi, 411.) And, as *CE.* itself points out, Mary is not mentioned as in the line of descent from David in either list. To bring her into the genealogy, in one list or the other, it must have been written: "And Jacob begat *Mary* the wife of Joseph," instead of "And

Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary": *or* "And Jesus . . . being . . . the son of *Mary*, which was the *daughter* of Heli," instead of the recorded "the *son* of Joseph (as was supposed), which was the son of Heli" (Luke iii, 22–31). Both the genealogies are false and forged lists of mostly fictitious names, in the original Gospel-forgeries, fabricated to prove Jesus a direct son or descendant of David, and thus to fulfill the terms of the pretended prophecies that the human Messiah should be of the race and lineage of David the king.

Moreover, Joseph and Mary *both knew nothing* of the Holy-Ghostly paternity of their child Jesus. The celebrated Angelic "Annunciation" of this Fable to the "prolific yet ever-virgin Mother of God," recorded by Dr. Luke (i, 28), is itself a *forgery*, admits *CE.*: "The words: 'Blessed art thou among women' (v. 28) are *spurious* and taken from verse 42, the account of the Visitation . . . [Adding] The opinion that Joseph at the time of the Annunciation was an aged widower and Mary 12 or 15 years of age, is founded only upon apocryphal documents"—like all the rest of these Fables of Christ. (*CE.* i, 542.) Simeon came into the temple when Joseph and Mary had brought the child there "to do for him after the custom of the law," and indulged in some ecstasies which would have been quite intelligible if Gabriel had made the revelations attributed to him; but, hearing them, "*Joseph and his mother marvelled* at those things which were spoken of him" (Lk. ii, 33). It is false, the original says: "His *father* and his mother marvelled." etc. Here is another holy forgery stuck into Luke ii, as is the later verse, "and *Joseph* and his mother knew not of it" (v. 43). The true original reads "and his *parents* knew not of it,"—just as in verse 41; "Now his *parents* went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover"; and as in verse 48, "thy *father* and I have sought thee sorrowing." In "John," Jesus is twice expressly called the *son of Joseph;* Philip says to Nathaniel, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, *the son of Joseph*" (i, 45); and again: "Is not this Jesus, *the son of Joseph*, whose *father* and mother we know?" (vi, 42);—all which "convincingly proves that in the mind of the narrator Joseph and Mary *were and knew themselves to be*, in the natural sense of the words, the parents of Jesus." (*EB.*

iii, 3344.) The same authority thus sums up the whole of the New Testament evidence prior to the "interpolations" of miraculous birth: "The remark has long ago and often been made that, like Paul, even the Gospels themselves know nothing of the miraculous birth of our Saviour. On the contrary, their knowledge of his natural filial relationship to Joseph the carpenter, and to Mary, his wife, is still explicit." (*Ibid.*) And if Jesus had been a God he could hardly have been crazy; yet his own family thought him so and sent to arrest him as a madman, as above noticed. It is therefore self-evident, that the original Jesus "tradition," down as late as Papias and Irenæus, regarded Jesus simply as a man, and as a very old man when he died a peaceful and natural death. But the zeal to combat and win the Pagans, when, after the failure with the Jews, the Gospel "turned to the Gentiles," and to exalt the man Jesus into a God, as was Perseus or Apollo, grew with the Fathers; by the same token Jesus was now made to be the son of the Hebrew God Yahveh: we have heard the Fathers so argue. So later pious tampering grafted the "Virgin-birth" and "son of God" Pagan myths onto the simple original "traditions" of merely human origin as the "son of David," carelessly letting the primitively forged Davidic genealogies remain to contradict and refute them. These "interpolations" are self-apparent forgeries for Christ's sake, in two of the Gospels.

But if Tertullian spoke truly (if the passage is genuine with him), the other Gospels have been yet further tampered with; for Tertullian explicitly says: "Of the apostles, John and Matthew, and apostolic men, Luke and Mark, these *all start* with the same principles of the faith . . . how that He was *born of the Virgin*, and came to fulfill the law and the prophets." (*Adv. Marcion*, IV, ii; *ANF.* iii, 347.) As these Gospels now stand, Mark and John say not a word of the Virgin-birth, but throughout assume Jesus to have been of human birth, and only "son of God" in a popular religious sense; for "son of God" was in current usage to mean any person near and dear to God. Indeed, the Greek text of the Gospels makes this plain, that no supernatural progeneration and actual God-sonship was intended. In most instances the Greek texts read simply "son of God—*huios Theou*," not "*the* Son—*o huious*": the definite article is a clerical falsification.

"UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH"

Of transcendent importance as the sole basis of the Church's most presumptuous False Pretense—its Divine founding by Jesus Christ—this Peter-Rock imposture, the most notorious, and in its evil consequences the most far-reaching and fatal of them all, will now be exposed to its deserved infamy and destruction.

Upon a forged, and forced, Greek Pun put into the mouth of the Jewish Aramaic-speaking Jesus, speaking to Aramaic peasants, the Church of Christ is falsely founded. "The proof that Christ constituted St. Peter the head of His Church is found in the two famous Petrine texts, Matt. xvi, 17–19, and John xxi, 15–19." (*CE.* xii, 261.) The text in John is that about "Feed my Lambs"; but this forgery is not of present interest. The more notorious "proof" is Matthew's forged punning passage: "Thou art *Peter*, and upon this *rock* I will build my church," etc.

It may first be noticed, that "Matthew" is the only one of the three "Synoptic" gospelers to record this "famous Petrine text." And he records this pun as made in *Greek*, by Jesus—*just before his crucifixion*, under very exceptional circumstances, and upon the inspiration of a "special divine revelation" then and there first made by God to Peter, as below to be noted. But in this, "Matthew" is flatly contradicted by "John," who ascribes this as an *Aramaic* pun by Jesus *in the very first remark that he made to Peter, upon his being introduced by his brother Andrew*, on the self-same day of the baptism of Jesus; when "Andrew first findeth his brother Simon . . . and brought him to Jesus"; whereupon, "when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon son of Jona: *thou shalt be called Cephas*, which is by interpretation, A stone." (John i, 42.) Thus was Simon Barjona nicknamed "Cephas—Rock" by Jesus on the very first day of the public appearance and mission both of Jesus and of Peter, and *not* a year or more later, towards the close of the career of Jesus! So the famous Petrine Pun, if ever made by Jesus—as it was *not*—was made in the Aramaic speech spoken by these Galilean peasants; the Greek Father who forged the "Gospel according to John" had to attach the translation into Greek of the Aramaic "Cephas," into "Petros, a stone," for the benefit of his Greek readers.

After this first explosion of the famous Greek "Rock" pun on which the Church is founded, and as the matter is of highest consequence, let us expose the "Matthew" forgery of the whole "Petrine text" by arraying the three Synoptics in the "deadly parallel," in the order of their composition and evolution from simple to complex fabrication:

Mark (viii, 27–33).

"And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

"And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

"And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

Luke (ix, 18–22).

"And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him; and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

"They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

"He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

Matthew (xvi, 13–22).

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not *revealed* it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say unto thee, That thou art *Peter,* and upon this *rock* I will build my church; and the gates

Mark.	*Luke.*	*Matthew.*
		of hell shall not prevail against it. [Here about the *Keys*, and "binding and loosing"].
"And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.	"And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing.	"Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that *he was Jesus the Christ.*
"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.	"Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."	"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
"And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.		"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.
"But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."		"But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Let it be noted, in passing, that all three of the Synoptists expressly aver in the above narration, as elsewhere in their texts, that Jesus positively declared and predicted, that he should be put to death, and after three days rise again: distinctly, his Resurrection

from the dead. All three on this important point are liars, if John be believed; for after the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, and the discovery on the third day of his empty grave by the Magdalene, which she immediately reported to Peter and John, they ran doubting to the grave, looked in, and "saw, and believed"; and John positively avers: "For as yet they *knew not* the scripture, that he must *rise again from the dead.*" (John xx, 9.) But this inspired assertion contains a grave anachronism: for "as yet" there was, of course, *no* "scripture" about the death and resurrection at all, nor for well over a century afterwards, as in this chapter is proven.

Let us examine for a moment into the context of this "famous Petrine text" and into its antecedents, in order to get the "stage setting" of this dramatic climacteric Pun of such vast and serious consequences unto this day.

The original simple narrative is told in the earlier writer, "Mark," and copied almost verbatim into "Luke." There Jesus is reported to have put a sort of conundrum to the Twelve, "saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?" The answer showed a very superstitious belief in reincarnations or "second comings" of dead persons to earth; for "they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets, or Jeremias," to fuse the somewhat disparate replies. Jesus himself shared this reincarnation superstition, for he had positively asserted that John the Baptist *was* Elijah *redivivus:* "This *is* Elias, which was for to come," (Matt. xi, 14; xvii, 11–13); though John, being questioned about it, "Art thou Elias?" contradicted the Christ, "and he saith, I am *not.*" (John i, 20, 21.)

After hearing the disciples report what others said about him, who he was, Jesus then "saith unto them, But whom say *ye* that I am? And *Peter* answereth and saith unto him, *Thou art the Christ.* And he charged them that they should tell no man of him" (Mk. viii, 27–30; Lk. ix, 18–22). There was certainly nothing novel or unexpected in this alleged reply of Peter; it was exactly the proclaimed mission of Jesus as the "promised Messiah," as the precedent texts of "Mark" verify. On the day of his baptism by John, before all the people, "the heavens opened . . . And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son" (i, 2); what the devils cried out in the

synagogue, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God" (i, 24); just what all the devils unanimously proclaimed before the disciples and all hearers, "And unclean spirits, when they saw him, . . . cried, saying, Thou art the son of God" (iii, 2); just what the possessed man with the legion of devils cried out before all the disciples, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God" (v, 7);—all as recorded by "Mark" prior to the above reply by Peter. So, naturally, Peter's "confession" caused no surprise; it was the expected thing: so *Jesus made no remark on hearing it*, except the peculiar injunction that "they should tell no man"—what all men and devils already knew by much-repeated hearsay. So Jesus at once proceeded to speak of his coming persecution, death, and resurrection; "And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mk. viii, 31–33). The identical story in its same simple form, minus the Satan colloquy, is told also in Luke (ix, 18–22). This is the round, unvarnished tale of the first Greek Father "gospel" writers, a century after the reputed conversation, and long before the "primacy of Peter" idea dawned as a "good thing" upon the Fathers of the Church. There is not a word about "church" in the passage, nor in the entire "gospel according to Mark," nor in Luke, nor in even the much later "John."

The later Church Father who wrote up the original of the "gospel according to Matthew," copied Mark's story substantially verbatim, Mark's verses 27–33, being nearly word for word reproduced in Matthew's 13–16, 20–24 of chapter xvi; the only material verbal difference being in Peter's answer, in verse 16, where Peter's words are expanded: "Thou art the Christ, *the Son of the Living God,*"—obviously padded in by the "interpolator" of verses 17–19, which we now examine.

As the years since "Mark" rolled by, the zeal of the Fathers to exalt Peter increased; we have seen many admitted forgeries of documents having that purpose in view. So it was, obviously, a new forging Father who took a manuscript of "Matthew," and turning to the above verses copied from "Mark," added in, or made a new manu-

script copy containing, the notable forgery of verses 17–19. There, onto the commonplace and unnoticed reply of Peter, "Thou art the Christ," the pious interpolator tacked on:

"the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xvi, 16b–19.)

It is impossible that the original writer of "Matthew" should have written those remarkable and preposterous verses, in which Jesus is made to take Peter's commonplace announcement, "Thou art the Christ," as a "special revelation from heaven" to Peter and a great secret mystery here first "revealed";—this matter of common notoriety and even devil-gossip throughout Israel, as we have seen from "Mark's" numerous Christ-texts; the same is true in Luke. These avowals that Jesus was the Christ are even more numerous and explicit in "Matthew" up to the interpolation. That Jesus was "Christ" is the identical disclosure and announcement, which had been declared by Gabriel to Mary; by a dream to the suspicious Joseph; by wicked Herod, who "demanded of them where *Christ* should be born" (ii, 4); by the voice from heaven proclaiming to the world, "This is my beloved Son" (iii, 17); that was declared by the Devil in the wilderness, "If thou be the Son of God" (iv, 6); that the Legion of Devils cried aloud, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God" (viii, 29); that Jesus himself avowed of himself time and again, "All things are delivered unto me by *my Father*, Lord of heaven and earth" (xi, 25–27); that all the crew of Peter's fishing-boat acclaimed when they "worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (xiv, 33). Just two chapters earlier in Matthew, is the fable of Jesus and Peter "walking on the water," as "foretold" by the Sibyls; when Peter began to sink, he was rescued and dragged aboard the little fishing boat by Jesus;—"*and they that were in the ship came and worshipped him*, saying, Of a truth *thou art the son of God.*" (Mt. xiv, 29–33.) So that Peter's wonderful information was no novelty and special divine rev-

elation, to himself, but was the common credulity and gossip of the whole crew of fishermen, devils and Palestinian peasantry. And long before, on the very next day after his baptism by John, and before Peter was "called" or even *found*, and when his brother Andrew went and found him to bring him to Jesus, Andrew declared *to Peter:* "We have found the *Messias*, which is, being interpreted, *the Christ*"! (John i, 41.) And, on the next day Nathaniel said to Jesus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel"! (John i, 49.) Peter's wonderful "special revelation" and confession thus lose all originality and are without merit of the great "reward" which *CE.* (xii, 261) says Jesus bestowed upon him for this pretended original and inspired discovery, as we shall in due order notice.

That Jesus Christ never spoke the words of those forged verses, that they are a late Church forgery, is beyond any intelligent or honest denial. The *first mention* of them in "patristic literature," and that only a reference to the "keys," is this scant line of Father Tertullian, in a little tract called *Scorpiace* or "The Scorpion's Sting," written *about 211* A. D., in which he says: "For though you think heaven is still shut, remember that the Lord left to Peter and through him to the Church, the keys of it." (*Scorpiace*, x; *ANF.* iii, 643.) That Jesus did not use the words of those verses, interpolated into a paragraph of Matthew copied bodily and verbatim by the original "Matthew" writer from "Mark," and repeated in their original form by "Luke," is thus conclusive from "internal" evidences; the later and embroidered form is a visible interpolation and forgery. That this is true, is demonstrated, moreover, by the inherent impossibility of the thing itself.

THE "CHURCH" FOUNDED ON THE "ROCK"

First of all, in proof that Jesus Christ never made this Pun, did not establish any Christian Church—nor even a Jewish reformed synagogue,—are his own alleged positive statements to be quoted in refutation of the other forged "missionary" passage in Matthew: "Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations." The avowed mission of Jesus, as we have seen from his reputed words, was exclusively to his fellow Jews: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; and he expressly commanded his disciples not to preach to the

Gentiles, nor even to the near-Jewish Samaritans. He proclaimed the immediate end of the world, and his quick second coming to establish the exclusively Jewish Kingdom of Heaven, even before all the Jews of little Palestine could be warned of the event—that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It is impossible, therefore, that Jesus could have so flagrantly contradicted the basic principles of his exclusive mission as the Jewish promised Messiah, and could have commanded the institution of a permanent and perpetual religious organization, an "*ecclesia*" or "Church," to preach his exclusively Jewish Messianic doctrines to all nations of the earth, which was to perish within that generation. This is a conclusive proof of the later "interpolation" or forgery of this punning passage.

On this point says *EB.*:

"It would be a great mistake to suppose that Jesus himself founded a new religious community" (c. 3103).—"A further consideration which tells against the genuineness of Mt. xvi, 18b, is the occurrence in it of the word *ecclesia*. It has been seen to be impossible to maintain that Jesus founded any distinct religious community. . . .

"As for the word itself, it occurs elsewhere in the Gospels only in Mt. xviii, 17. There, however, it denotes simply the Jewish local community to which every one belongs; for what is said relates not to the future but to the present, in which a Christian *ecclesia* cannot, of course, be thought of." (c. 3105) . . . "It is impossible to regard as historical the employment of the word *ecclesia* by Jesus as the designation of the Christian community." (*EB.* iii, 3103, 3105, 3117.)

Indeed, as said by a contemporary wit, the truth is that "Jesus Christ did not found the Church—he is its Foundling. His parent, the Jewish church, abandoned the child; the Roman church took it in, adopted it, and gave his mother a certificate of good character." (*The Truth Seeker*, 10/23/26.)

Jesus spoke Aramaic, a dialect of the ancient and "dead" Hebrew. The true name of the fisherman "Prince of the Apostles," just repudiated by Jesus as "Satan," was *Shimeon*, or in its Greek form, Simon, who was later "surnamed Peter." He attained somehow the Aramaic nickname Kepha, or in its Greek form, Cephas, meaning a rock; this evidently furnished to the Greek punster the cue for his play on words: "Thou art *Petros* [Greek, *petros*, a rock; cf. Eng. petrify, petroleum,

etc.], and upon this *petros* [rock] I will build my *ecclesia* [church]." Jesus could not have made this Greek play on words; neither Peter nor any of the other "ignorant and unlearned" Jewish peasant disciples could have understood it. Much less could Jesus have said, or the apostles have understood, this other Greek word "*ecclesia*," even had it been possible for Jesus, facing the immediate end of the world—proclaimed by himself—to have dreamed of founding any permament religious sect. There was nothing like *ecclesia* known to the Jews; it was a technical Greek term designating the free political assemblies of the Greek republics. This is illustrated by one sentence from the Greek Father Origen, about 245 A. D., when the Church had taken over the Greek political term *ecclesia* to denote its own religious organization. Says Origen, using the word in both its old meaning and in its new Christian adaptation: "For the Church [*ecclesia*] of God, *e. g.*, which is at Athens; . . . Whereas the assembly [*ecclesia*] of the Athenians," etc. (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii, 20; *ANF.* iv, 476.) The Greek Fathers who, a century later, founded the Church among the Pagan Greek-speaking Gentiles, adopted the Greek word *ecclesia* for their organizations because the word was familiar for popular assemblies, and because the translators of the Septuagint had used *ecclesia* as the nearest Greek term for the translation of the two Hebrew words *qahal* and *edah* used in the Old Testament for the "congregation" or "assembly" of all Israel at the tent of meeting.

These Hebrew words (*qahal, edah*) had also a more general use, as signifying any sort of gathering or crowd, religious or secular. Thus "sinners shall not stand in the congregation [Heb. *edah*] of the righteous" (Ps. i, 5); or of a mob of wicked ones: "I have hated the congregation [Heb. *qahal*] of evil doers" (Ps. xxvi, 5); and even of the great assemblage of the dead: "The man that—[etc.], shall remain in the congregation [Heb. *qahal*] of the dead" (Prov. xxi, 16); all these various senses being rendered "*ecclesia*" in the Greek Septuagint translation.

Thus no established and permanent organization of disciples of the Christ is implied by the term *ecclesia*, even if Jesus could have used the Aramaic equivalent of that Greek term; at most it would have only meant the small group of Jews which might adopt the "Kingdom of Heaven" watchword and watchfully wait until the speedy end of the

world and the expected quick consummation of the proclaimed Kingdom,—not yet come to be, these 2000 years.

This only possible meaning is made indisputable by the one other instance of the use of the Greek word *ecclesia* attributed to Jesus,—and that also by the myth-mongering "Matthew." Here Jesus is made to lay down some rules for settling the incessant discords among his peasant believers in the Kingdom: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee . . . tell it to the church [*ecclesia*] but if he neglect to hear the *ecclesia*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. xviii, 15–17);—that is, kick him like a dog out of your holy company and exclude him from share in the coming Kingdom. There was, of course, no organized Christian "Church" in the lifetime of Jesus; he could only have meant—(if he said it), that disputes were to be referred to the others of the little band of Kingdom-watchers, who should drop the "trespasser" out of their holy group if he proved recalcitrant and insisted upon the right of his opinion or action. But Jesus never said even this; it is a forged later companion-piece to the "Rock and Keys" forgery, as is proven by the following verse 18—(a *repetition* of xvi, 19)—regarding the "binding and loosing" powers given to itself by the later forging Church when it assumed this preposterous prerogative of domination.

The "On this Rock" forgery of Matt. xvi, says Reinach, "is obviously an interpolation, made at a period when a church, separated from the synagogue, already existed. In the parallel passages in Mark (vii, 27, 32) and in Luke (ix, 18–22), there is not a word of the primacy of Peter, a detail which Mark, the disciple of Peter, could hardly have omitted if he had known of it. The interpolation is posterior to the compilation of Luke's gospel." (*Orpheus*, pp. 224–225.)

As aptly said by Dr. McCabe; "It [the word *ecclesia*] had no meaning whatever as a religious institution until decades after the death of Jesus Christ. In the year 30 A. D. no one on earth would have known what Jesus meant if he had said that he was going to 'found' an *ecclesia* or church, and that the powers of darkness would not prevail against it, and so on. It would sound like the talk of the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*." (*The Story of Religious Controversy*, p. 294.) Indeed, it may be remarked, it is the "powers of darkness" of

mind which have so far prevailed to perpetuate this fraud; the powers of the light of reason are hastening to its final overthrow.

"PETER-ROCK-CHURCH" DENIED AB SILENCIO

"Luke" was not present when this moumental pronouncement of the "Rock and Keys" was allegedly made; Peter may have forgotten to tell him of it, or "Luke" may have forgotten that Peter told him. And Peter may have forgotten to tell of it and of his peerless "primacy" to his own "companion" and "interpreter" Mark, or Mark may have forgotten that Peter told him, and thus have failed to record so momentous an event. But John, the "Beloved Disciple" was right there, with Matthew, himself, one of the speakers and hearers in the historic colloquy,—and John totally ignores it. The silence of all three discredits and repudiates it. Moreover, and most significantly, Peter himself, in his two alleged Epistles, has not a word of his tremendous dignity and importance conferred on him by his Master; never once does he describe himself in the pride of priestly humility, "Peter, Servant of the servants of God," or "Prince of Apostles: or even "Bishop of the Church which sojourns at Rome," or any such to distinguish himself from the common herd of peasant apostles. Peter must have been very modest, even more so than his "Successors."

Furthermore, the official "Acts of the Apostles" never once notes this divinely commissioned "primacy" of Peter; and every other book of the New Testament utterly ignores it. Paul is said to have written a sententious "Epistle to the Romans," and to have written two or three Epistles from Rome, where Peter is supposed to have been, enthroned as divine Vicar of God and Head of the Church Universal; and yet never a word of this tremendous fact; Paul did not know it, or ignores it. The "Epistles of Paul," fourteen of them, and the "Acts," are replete with defiances of Paul to Peter,—"I withstood him to his face"; and in all the disputes between them, over matters of the faith and the fortunes of the new "Church," not a single one of the Apostles rises in his place and suggests that Peter is Prince and Primate, and that Peter's view of the matters was *ex-cathedra* the voice of God, and he, having spoken, the matter was settled. Paul, in all his Epistles,

never gives a suspicion that he had ever heard, even from Peter, of the latter's superior authority.

Thus the admitted principal, if not only "proof" which the Church urges for its Divine and "Petrine" foundation is found to be—like every other Church muniment and credential, a clerical forgery, a priestly imposture. We shall glance at some other like examples of the Christian art of "Scripture" falsification.

"GO, TEACH ALL NATIONS" FORGERY

Applying Tertullian's test of authenticity, that contradictory passages betray a later "interpolation," the closing verses, 16–20, of the last chapter of Matthew—as of Mark 9–20,—are themselves late interpolations or forged passages.

Matthew previously quotes Jesus as declaring: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (xv, 24; x, 6); and his command to the Twelve: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (x, 5, 6). Also Matthew (as Mark) has reiterated the assurance of the immediacy of the end of the world and the "second coming" in glory: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." (Mt. x, 23; cf. x, 7; xxvi, 28, 34, *passim.*) So that neither in reason nor in truthful statement could it be possible for Jesus to have met the Eleven a few days after his resurrection, in Galilee, and commanded them in this wonderful language: "Go ye therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptizing them *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—which he had just, and repeatedly, averred should happen in the life-time of his hearers and before they could preach even to the Jews of little Palestine. (Mt. xxviii, 18, 20; cf. Mk. xvi, 15–16.) This "command" could only have been "interpolated" into the forged ending of Matthew and Mark long after the original form of the tradition of Jesus had been first written, and when the "second coming" in the "Kingdom of God" and the immediate "end of the world" had become impossible of further credit by lapse of long years of time and disappointed expectation. It could also only have been written *after* the gospel of the "Kingdom" for the Jews had failed,

and the apostles had "turned to the Gentiles," which was not, even on the face of Scripture, until after the so-called "Council of Jerusalem," when the Jewish apostles, after bitter quarrel with the interloper Paul, had recognized Paul's pretended "revelation" of mission to the Gentiles and had parcelled out the propaganda work, Paul to the uncircumcised Gentiles, all the others, Peter included, to "the circumcision" only; though the entire story of the Council is itself a contradictory fabrication, as demonstrated by *EB.* (i, 916, *et seq.*)

ACTS BELIES THE "GO, TEACH ALL NATIONS" FORGERY

Culminating proof that Jesus Christ never uttered this command, to "Go, teach all nations," of Matthew and Mark, and that it is a forgery long after interpolated into the original forged texts, is found in the positive "history" of the inspiredly forged Acts of the Apostles, in Holy Writ itself. If Jesus Christ, just arisen from the dead, had given that ringing and positive command to Peter and the Eleven, utterly impossible would it have been for the remarkable "history" recorded in Acts to have occurred. Acts, too, disproves the assertion of Mark that, straightway, after the command was given to the Eleven, "they went forth, and preached everywhere" (Mk. xvi, 20),—that is, to all nations thereabouts, the Pagan Gentiles. A further contradiction may be noted: Matthew says that the command was given to the Eleven in Galilee, on "a mountain where Jesus had appointed them" (Mt. xxviii, 16–19),—and some days after the resurrection; whereas Mark records that the command was given to the Eleven "as they sat at meat," evidently in a house in Jerusalem, through the roof of which Jesus immediately afterwards ascended into heaven (Mk. xvi, 14–19); after which they immediately "went forth, and preached everywhere" (verse 20). But they did not, as the silence of the other two Gospels, and the positive evidence of Acts and several of the Epistles, proves; together with the promised disproof of the "Go, teach all nations" command, for preaching the Kingdom to the Gentile Pagans, now to be produced.

Cornelius, the leader of the Italian Band at Cæsarea, a Roman Gentile Pagan, had a "revelation" that he should go to Joppa to find Peter, evidently with a view to "conversion" and admission into the new all-Jewish sect. A companion vision in a trance was awarded to

Peter, seemingly to prepare him for the novel notion of community with Gentiles; though "Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean"; but at this juncture the messengers came from Cornelius, and related to Peter the vision of Cornelius, and his request that Peter come to see him. Evidently, *Peter had never heard of the Master's command*, alleged to have been given by Jesus *to Peter himself*, and the others: "Go, teach all nations" of the uncircumcised, for he said to the messengers: "Ye know how it is *an unlawful thing* for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one *of another nation*"; but recalling the vision from which he had just awaked, he added: "but God hath shewed me" that it was permissible now to deal with "one of another nation." So, Peter went along to Cornelius, and he asked "For what intent ye have sent for me?" Cornelius repeated the vision, and said, "Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee by God." At this, Peter was evidently greatly surprised, and "opened his mouth, and replied; Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But that in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Thus clearly *Peter had never heard his Jesus command:* "Go, teach all nations"; it required this new "revelation"—some years later—for him to tardily and finally "perceive" that God accepted even "one of another nation." Clearer yet is this, that up to this time, "salvation is of the Jews" only, by Peter's next words: "The *word which God sent unto the children of Israel* . . . which was published *throughout Judæa*—[*not* to "all nations"], and began in Galilee, after the baptism which John preached—[*not* baptism "in the name" of the Trinity]. . . . And he [Jesus] commanded us to preach unto all the people"—of the children of Israel. And now for proof positive: Peter was now "showed" the new dispensation: a visitation of the Holy Ghost came upon the Pagans present, who thereupon all "spake with tongues," to the great amazement of Peter and his Jewish companions: "They of the circumcision which believed were *astonished*, as many as came with *Peter, because that on the Gentiles* was *also* poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," which had been promised only to all believing Jews. Ignorant thus of the Christ's pre-ascension command to *him* and the Eleven, to teach all men, but *now* convinced that "one of another nation" was acceptable with God, and should be baptized,

Peter yielded, and argued for his companions to consent: "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should *not be baptized,* which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts x),—*not* in the name of the Trinity, as Matthew alleges that Jesus himself had commanded Peter himself to do. So this bit of Scripture "history" is positive refutation of the "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" forgery.

And none of the others of the Twelve had ever heard the command. For immediately that they learned of this flagrant "heresy" of Peter, "that the Gentiles have also received the word of God," they were piously outraged and furious against Peter: "And when Peter had come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision *contended with him,* Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Peter put up a long argument in defense, urging the "revelation" to Cornelius and his own trance vision, quoted the gospels of Matthew and John—(*not yet in existence!*),—and wound up: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, . . . what am I, that I could withstand God?" This line of argument pacified the other apostles; "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, *Then* hath God *also to the Gentiles* granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi.) Perfect proof is this, that the alleged "Go, teach all nations" command of the Christ to Peter and the other apostles, is a falsification, a late forgery into Matthew and Mark: for if Jesus had so commanded these same apostles, the special revelations would not have been necessary; Peter's doubt and hesitation, and the row of the others with Peter for baptizing Cornelius and his Band could not have occurred, would have been impossible and absurd; as would have been the apostolic rows of the "Council of Jerusalem," recorded in Acts xv and belied by Paul in Galatians ii, as is made evident in *EB.* (i, 916.)

This incontrovertible fact, that Jesus Christ never uttered that command, "Go, teach all nations," and that the texts so reciting are later forgeries to serve the Gentilic propaganda of the Faith after the Jews had rejected it,—is confessed by *CE.* in these destructive words: "The Kingdom of God had special reference to *Jewish beliefs.* . . .

A *still further expansion* resulted *from the revelation directing* St. Peter *to admit to baptism* Cornelius, a devout Gentile." (*CE.* iii, 747.) If Jesus Christ, preaching the exclusive Jewish Kingdom, had revised and reversed his God-ordained program, and had commanded "Go, *teach all nations, baptizing* them," the "expansion" would have resulted then and there from the command itself,—not from the "revelation" and apostolic row some years later, which would have been unnecessary and supererogatory—as it was unseemly. Thus another pious lie and forgery is exposed and confessed.

Even more plain and comprehensive are the words of this same divine forged command of the Christ, as recorded by Mark: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mk. xvi, 15–16.) It should be a relief to many pious Hell-fearing Christians to know that their Christ did not utter these damning words, and that they may disbelieve with entire impunity; that they are priestly forgeries to frighten credulous persons into belief and submission to priestcraft. The proofs of this from the Bible itself we see confirmed by clerical admissions under compulsion from exposure of the fraud.

Thus this whole section, says Reinach, is a "late addition" to Mark, "and is not found in the best manuscripts." (Orpheus, p. 221.) We have seen that *CE.* includes this section among those rejected as spurious up to the time that the Holy Ghost belatedly vouched for it at the Council of Trent in 1546, putting the seal of divine truth upon this lie. Both these parallel but exceedingly contradictory closing sections of Matthew and Mark, are spurious additions made after the "end of the world" and "second coming" predictions had notoriously failed, in order to give pretended divine sanction to the "turning to the Gentiles," after the Jews, to whom alone the Christ was sent and had expressly and repeatedly limited his mission, had rejected his claim to be Messiah.

The Gentile Church of Christ has therefore no divine sanction; was never contemplated nor created by Jesus Christ. The Christian Church is thus founded on a forgery of pretended words of the pretended Christ. This proposition is of such immense significance and importance, that I array here the admissions of the forgery, in addition to

the demonstration of its falsity above given. The virtual admissions of *CE.* totally destroy the authenticity of the entire spurious section, Mark xvi, 9–20, together with the correlated passages of the equally spurious "Matthean addition," copied from Mark, with embellishments into Matthew.

THE FORGED GOSPEL ENDINGS

"The conclusion of Mark (xvi, 9–20) is admittedly not genuine. Still less can the shorter conclusion lay claim to genuineness. . . . Almost the entire section is a compilation, partly even from the fourth gospel and Acts." (*EB.* ii, 1880; 1767, n. 3; 1781, and n. 1, on "the evidence of its spuriousness.") "The longer form . . . has against it the testimony of the two oldest Uncial MSS. (Siniatic and Vatican) and one of the two earliest of the Syriac Versions (Siniatic Syriac), all of which close the chapter at verse 8. In addition to this, is the very significant silence of Patristic literature as to anything following verse 8." (*New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 551.) The acute and careful critical reasonings and evidences upon which the foregoing conclusions are based, I have omitted from these extracts, to present them in full in the following ample review from *CE.*, which, "reasoning in chains" fettered upon it by the Trentine Decree, yet fully establishes the impeaching facts and substantially confesses the forgery into "Mark," while "saving its face" for the "inspiration" of the forgery by clerical assumption of "some other inspired pen" as the source of the text, which makes it "just as good" as any other, when invested with the sanctity of the sanction of the Council of Trent. Says *CE.:*

"But the great textual problem of the Gospel (Mark) concerns the genuineness of the last twelve verses. Three conclusions of the Gospel are known: the long conclusion, as in our Bibles, containing verses 9–20, the short one ending with verse 8, and an intermediate form [described]. . . . Now this third form may be dismissed at once—[as an admitted Bible *forgery*]. No scholar regards this intermediate conclusion as having any title to acceptance.

"We may pass on, then, to consider how the case stands between the long conclusion and the short, *i. e.* between accepting xvi, 9–20, as a genuine portion of the original Gospel, or making the original end with xvi, 8. Eusebius . . . pointing out that the passage in Mark beginning with verse

9 *is not contained* in all the MSS. of the Gospel. The historian then goes on himself to say that in nearly all the MSS. of Mark, at least *in the accurate ones,* the Gospel ends with xvi, 8. . . . St. Jerome also says in one place that the passage *was wanting* in nearly all Greek MSS. . . . As we know, he incorporated it in the Vulgate. . . . If we add to this that the Gospel ends with xvi, 8, in the *two oldest* Greek MSS.—[Siniatic and Vatican]—[also in the Siniatic Syriac, some Ethiopic, Armenian, and other MSS.] indicate doubt as to whether the true ending is at verse 8 or verse 20. (p. 678.) . . .

"Much has been made of the silence of some of the third and fourth century Fathers, their silence being interpreted to mean that they either did not know the passage or rejected it. Thus Tertullian, SS. Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Cyril of Alexandria.

"When we turn to the internal evidence, the number, and still more the character, of the peculiarities is certainly striking [citing many instances from the Greek text]. . . . But, even when this is said, the cumulative force of the evidence against the Marcan origin of the passage is considerable. (p. 678.) . . . The combination of so many peculiar features, not only of vocabulary, but of matter and construction, leaves room for *doubt* as to the Marcan authorship of the verses. (p. 679.) . . .

"Whatever the fact be, it is not at all certain that Mark did not write the disputed verses. *It may be that he did not; that they are from the pen of some other inspired writer* [!], and were appended to the Gospel in the the first century or the beginning of the second. . . . Catholics are not bound to hold that the verses were written by St. Mark. But they are *canonical* Scripture, *for* the Council of Trent (Sess. IV), in defining that all parts of the Sacred Books are to be received as sacred and canonical, had especially in view *the disputed parts of the Gospels,* of which this conclusion of Mark is one. Hence, whoever wrote the verses, they are *inspired,* and must be received as such by every Catholic." (*CE.* ix, 677, 678, 679.)

The *New Commentary on the Holy Scripture* has a special section entitled "The Ending of St. Mark's Gospel," in which it reviews the evidences in much the same manner as *CE.*, with additional new and able criticism; it thus concludes,—not being fettered by the dogmatic decision of the Council of Trent, which *CE.* so clerically yields to in the letter but evades in the spirit:

"It is practically certain that neither Matthew nor Luke found it in their copies of Mark [from which they copied in making up the gospels under those names: see pp. 33, 45]. . . . The Last Twelve Verses are con-

structed as an independent summary with total neglect of the contents of xvi, 1–8. . . . It is as certain as anything can be in the domain of criticism that the Longer Ending did not come from the pen of the evangelist Mark. . . . We conclude that *it is certain that the Longer Ending is no part of the Gospel.*" (*New Commentary*, Pt. III, pp. 122, 123.)

More shaming proofs and confessions of forgery of pretended words of the Christ there could not be, than of this falsified command to preach a forged Gospel to the credulous dupes of Paganism. Gentile Christianity collapses upon its forged foundations.

THE BAPTISMAL FORGERY

The contradictory "baptismal formulas," the simple "in the name of the Lord" of Peter in Acts, and the elaborated forgery of Matthew, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," are sufficiently branded with falsity in the preceding paragraphs, and may be dismissed without further notice. This "Trinitarian Formula" is most palpably a late forgery, never uttered by Jesus Christ; for the Holy "Trinity" was not itself officially invented until the Council of Constantinople, in 381 A. D. Admittedly, "of all revealed truths this is the *most impenetrable to reason*"; it is therefore called a "mystery." (*CE.* xv, 52.) Of this Baptism-formula of Matthew, the ex-priest scholar, McCabe, says: "It was fraudulently added to the gospel when the priesthood was created." (*LBB.* 1121, p. 4.) Bishop Gore's English Divines thus cautiously confess the fraud: "Matthew's witness to the teaching of the risen Lord in these verses is widely rejected on two grounds. . . . The witness of Acts makes it almost certain that baptism at first was into the name of Jesus Christ, and not formally into the name of the Blessed Trinity. . . . It is quite likely that Matthew here expresses our Lord's teaching in language which the Lord Himself did not actually use." (*New Comm.*, Pt. III, p. 204; cf. *EB.* i, 474.) Another blasting priestly fraud of "Scripture" forgery is thus exposed and confessed!

A MEDLEY OF FORGERIES

After the foregoing colossal forgeries within the originally forged Gospels of Jesus Christ, there yet remain many other viciously dishonest falsifications of text. A little trinity of them only will be noted.

THE "WOMAN IN ADULTERY" FORGERY

The *CE.* has admitted that the so-called *pericope adulteræ* was regarded as spurious until the Council of Trent, in 1546, declared it divine truth; but Reinach says: "The episode of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery, which was inserted in John's gospel in the fourth century, was originally in the [apocryphal] 'Gospel according to the Hebrews.' " (*Orpheus*, p. 235.)

THE JOHN XXI FORGERY

The entire chapter xxi of John is likewise a surcharge of forgery in that gospel; it may be disposed of with this terse comment of *EB.*: "As xx, 30–31 constitutes a formal and solemn conclusion, xxi is beyond question a later appendix. We may go on to add that it does not come from the same author with the rest of the book." (*EB.* ii, 2543.)

THE "LORD'S PRAYER" FORGERY

As may be seen by mere comparison, the "Doxology" at the end of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew (vi, 13): "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen," is an interpolation into the original text, and is omitted as spurious by the Revised Version; it is *not* in the Catholic "True" Version. But, it may be remarked, the whole of the so-called Lord's Prayer is not the Lord's at all; it is a late patch-work of pieces out of the Old Testament, as readily shown by the marginal cross-references,—just as we have seen that the "Apostles Creed" was said to have been patched up by inspired lines from each apostle. The Sermon on the Mount, in which its most used form is found, is a concatenation of supposed *logia* or "sayings" of Jesus, drawn out through three chapters of "Matthew"; it was delivered before "the multitudes" which surrounded the Master and his disciples, and in the middle of the fictitious discourse. This is not true, according to "Luke," who makes it out a private talk in reply to a question by one of the Twelve: "And it came to pass, that, as (Jesus) was praying in a certain place, when he ceased one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father," etc. (Luke xi, 1–

2.) Indeed, the entire "Lord's Prayer" in Matthew, copied from Luke and expanded with considerable new material, is as to such new matter a forgery, confesses *CE.*: "Thus it is that the shorter form of the Lord's Prayer in Luke, xi, 2–4, is in almost all Greek manuscripts lengthened out in accordance with Matthew, vi, 9–13. Most *errors of this kind* proceed," etc. (*CE.* iv, 498.) I shall quote now the whole of *CE.'s* paragraph, admitting this and other "deliberate corruptions" of the New Testament texts, with clerical apologetic reasons therefor:

"(b) Errors Wholly or Partly *Intentional.*—Deliberate corruption of the Sacred Text has always been *rather* rare, Marcion's case being exceptional. Hort (Introduction (1896), p. 282) is of the opinion that 'even among the *unquestionably spurious* readings of the New Testament there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for dogmatic purposes.' Nevertheless it is true that the scribe *often selects* from various readings that which *favours* either his own individual opinion or *the doctrine that is just then more generally accepted.* It also happens that, in perfectly good faith, he changes passages which seem to him corrupt because he fails to understand them, that he adds a word which he deems necessary for the elucidation of the meaning, that he substitutes a more correct grammatical expression, and that he *harmonizes* parallel passages. Thus it is that the shorter form of the Lord's Prayer in Luke, xi, 2–4, is in almost all Greek manuscripts lengthened out in accordance with Matthew, vi, 9–13. Most errors of this kind proceed from inserting in the text marginal notes which, in the copy to be transcribed, were but variants, explanations, parallel passages, simple remarks, or perhaps the *conjectures* of some studious reader. All readers have observed the predilection of copyists for the most verbose texts and their tendency to complete citations that are too brief; hence it is that an *interpolation* stands a far better chance of being perpetuated than an omission." (*CE.* iv, 498.)

Thus, as to the "Lord's Prayer" in Matthew, its "variants" from Luke are confessed forgeries; every circumstance of the two origins is in contradiction. Like the whole "Sermon on the Mount," the Prayer is a composite of ancient sayings of the Scripture strung together to form it, as the marginal cross-references show throughout.

THE "UNKNOWN GOD" FORGERY

At this point I may call attention to a notable instance in *Acts* of a fraudulent perversion of text; Paul's use of the pretended inscrip-

tion on the statue on Mars' Hill, "To the Unknown God," on which is based his famous harangue to the Athenians: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." This omits the truth, for the whole inscription would have been fatal to his cause. The actual words of the inscription, together with some uncomplimentary comment on "Paul's" manipulation of the truth, are presented by the famous Catholic "Humanist" Erasmus. First he states the chronic clerical propensity to warp even Scripture to their deceptive schemes: "In general it is the public charter of all divines, to mould and bend the sacred oracles till they comply with their own fancy, spreading them (as Heaven by its Creator) like a curtain, closing together, or drawing them back as they please." Then he discloses the dishonest dodge of the great Apostle of Persecution: "Indeed, St. Paul minces and mangles some citations which he makes use of, and seems to wrest them to a different sense from that for which they were first intended, as is confessed by the great linguist St. Jerome. Thus when that apostle saw at Athens the inscription of an altar, he draws from it an argument for the proof of the Christian religion; but leaving out a great part of the sentence, which perhaps if fully recited might have prejudiced his cause, he mentions only the last two words, viz., *'To the Unknown God';* and this, too, not without alteration, for the whole inscription runs thus: 'TO THE GODS OF ASIA, EUROPE, AND AFRICA, TO ALL FOREIGN AND UNKNOWN GODS' "! (Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, p. 292.) That the original Greek text of *Acts* used the *plural* "gods" is shown by the marginal note to Acts xvii, 23, in the King James Version. From this dreary exposure of "Gospel" forgeries we pass to the forged "Epistles of the Apostles."

THE FORGED EPISTLES, ETC.

There are 21 so-called Epistles or Letters found in the New Testament under the names of five different "apostles" of Jesus Christ. Making a significant reservation which seems to question the plenary inspiration of the Council of Trent, "There are," says *CE.*, "thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, and *perhaps* fourteen, *if*, with the Council of Trent, we consider him the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews." (*CE.* xiv, 530.) If Paul, the "apostle of the Gentiles," didn't write the Let-

ter to the Hebrews, some Church Father must have forged it in his name. This was admitted by the early Fathers: "Tertullian ascribed it to Barnabas, and Origen confessed that the author was not known." (Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 235; *CE.* xiv, 525; *New Comm.* Pt. III, p. 596.) "The Epistle to the Hebrews," says *EB.*, "had already been excluded from the group [of then supposed Pauline Epistles] by Carlstadt (1520), and among those who followed him in this were Luther, Calvin, Grotius, etc." (*EB.* iii, 3605.) So *CE.'s* cautious clerical reservation is justified, and the forgery of *Hebrews* in the name of Paul may be taken as established, the inspired Council of Trent to the contrary notwithstanding.

But the entire "Pauline group" is in the same forged class with Hebrews, says *EB.* after exhaustive consideration of the proofs, internal and external:

"With respect to the canonical Pauline Epistles, . . . there are *none of them by Paul;* neither fourteen, nor thirteen, nor nine or eight, nor yet even the four so long 'universally' regarded as unassailable. They *are all, without distinction, pseudographia* [false-writings, forgeries];—[it adds, with a typical clerical striving after saving something from the wreckage] this, of course, not implying the least depreciation of their contents. . . . The group . . . bears obvious marks of a certain unity—of having originated *in one circle,* at one time, in one environment; but *not of unity of authorship.*" (*EB.* iii, 3625, 3626.) They are thus all uninspired anonymous church forgeries for Christ's sweet sake!

Besides the so-called Pauline Epistles, another group, *i. e.* those attributed to Peter, John, Jude and James, is known as "Catholic Epistles," so called because addressed to the Church at large; "not one of them is authentic." (Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 239; cf. *EB.*, under the various titles.) A third small group, Titus and 2 Timothy, are called "Pastoral Epistles" because they are addressed to pastors of churches. These, with Acts and the Book of Revelation, complete the tale of the Old-Christian Literature finally approved, in 1546, by the Council of Trent as divinely inspired, along with the inspired nonsense of Tobias, Judith, Bel and the Dragon, and like late Hebrew pious forgeries. With respect to the Apocalypse *Revelation,* attributed to the Apostle John, this has long been held to be impossible; nor is *Revelation* by the

same writer as the Fourth Gospel falsely attributed to John, as we have seen. The results of ancient patristic denials and of modern critical scholarship are thus summed up: "John . . . is not the author of the Fourth Gospel; so, in like manner, in the Apocalypse we may have here and there a passage that may be traced to him, but the book as a whole is not from his pen. Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse all come from the same *school.*" (*EB.* i, 199.) "The author of Revelation calls himself John the Apostle. As he was *not* John the Apostle, who died perhaps in Palestine about 66, he was a forger." (*Orpheus* p. 240.) The same can truly be said as to all the others.

It is impossible here to review the criticism of the twenty-three booklets individually. The comment of *EB.* on the Epistle to the Philippians, as not written by Paul, is fairly applicable to them all: "What finally puts an end to all doubt is the presence of unmistakable traces of *the conditions of a later period.* . . . More particularly, everything that points to *a considerably advanced stage in the development of doctrine.*" (*EB.* iii, 3709.) This principle of criticism will be admitted by anyone; we have read it from *CE.* as "universally admitted," to wit: "A fundamental one is that a literary work *always betrays* the imprint of the age and environment in which it was produced." (*CE.* iv, 492.) Paul and Peter are reputed to have died together in Rome under Nero, in 64 (67) A. D. We have shown the impossibility of the existence of "New Testament" writings, and of a "church" during the first several generations which daily expected the end of the world and the sudden second coming of the Christ to set up the supernatural Kingdom of God, among, of, and for Jews only. More especially impossible is it, that a *Catholic* or "universal" Church among the far-scattered cities and nations of the Gentiles should have existed even in embryo within the scant, say 35 years between the reputed death of Jesus about 30 A. D. and the deaths of Paul and Peter in 64 (67) A. D. Most impossible would it have been for such Gentile Church then to have had the intricate hierarchical organization of Bishops, presbyters, deacons, priests, and "damnable heresies," portrayed as actually existing and in active function, by these apocryphal Epistles. They are self-evidently the product of an elaborately organized church,—just as they are more elaborately laid out and their several jurisdictions and functions defined in the admittedly

forged *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Canons*, forged in the names of the apostles in the following centuries. Nothing from ancient times can be or is more positively proven false and forged than every book and text of the New Testament, attributed to apostles. Who can now deny this?

THE "EPISTLE OF PETER" FORGERIES

Owing to the peculiar importance attributed to them by the Church, as among the most unquestionable of its "proofs" of authentic divine foundation and sanction, the so-called Epistles I and II of Peter call for a few words of special refutation. These two Peter books were, in truth, questioned and denied from the early days. Bishop Eusebius, the first Church Historian, (*HE.* III, iii, 25), says of II Peter that it was "controverted and not admitted into the canon"; and, says *EB.*, "The tardy recognition of II Peter in the early church supports the judgment of the critical school as to its unapostolic origin." (*EB.* iii, 3684.)

The critical considerations which lead to the rejection of both Epistles as "not Petrine" and "not of the apostolic age," may be very briefly summarized: That I Peter is addressed to the "sojourners of the Dispersion" in Asia Minor, which was Paul's reserved territory. "There is no trace of the questions mooted in the apostolic age. . . . The historical conditions and circumstances implied in the Epistle indicate, moreover, a time far beyond the probable duration of Peter's life. . . . The history of the spread of Christianity imperatively demands for I Peter a later date than 64 A. D.," the alleged date of Peter's death. The second Epistle, II Peter, is vaguely addressed to Christians in general (i, 1), yet in iii, 1, the writer inconsistently assumes that the First Epistle was addressed to the same readers; and he tells them (i, 6 and iii, 15) that they had already received instructions from him (ostensibly Peter), and also letters from Paul. "The relation of II Peter to I Peter renders a common authorship extremely doubtful. The name and title of the author are different. . . . The style of the two epistles is different. . . . It is late and unapostolic." (*EB. Peter, Epistles of*, iii, 3678–3685; cf. *New Comm.* Pt. III, pp. 639, 653, 654.) "The genuineness of I Peter cannot be maintained.

Most probably it was not written before 112 A. D." (*EB.* 2940.) "The two letters of Peter are Graeco-Egyptian forgeries." (Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 240.) The Church pretense that I Peter was written at Rome ("Babylon") will be judged in its more appropriate place. In the early list of supposedly apostolic Books drawn up by Tertullian as accepted and read in the several Churches, while he "cites the Book of Enoch as inspired, . . . also recognizes IV Esdras, and the Sibyl, . . . he does not know James and II Peter. . . . He attributes Hebrews to St. Barnabas." (*CE.* xiv, 525.) Bishop Dionysius complains that his own writings "had been falsified by the apostles of the devil; no wonder, he adds, 'that the Scriptures were falsified by such persons.' " (*CE.* v, 10.) The "Peter" Books are other instances.

THE "GOD MANIFEST" FORGERY

In the King James or "Authorized" Version we read: "Great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," etc. (1 Tim. iii, 16.) In the "Revised Version" this "God manifest" forged interpolation is shamed out of the text, which there honestly reads: "He who was manifested in the flesh," etc. Thus the great "mystery of godliness," premised in the text, is no longer a mystery; and the fraudulent insertion into the text by some over-zealous Christian forger, seeking to bolster up an "apostolic" pedigree for the later "tradition" of the divinity of the Christ, is confessed. This pious "interpolation" was probably made at the time and by the same holy hands which forged the "Virgin-birth" interpolations into "Matthew" and "Luke." This passage is but one of a whole series of "Spurious Passages in the New Testament," catalogued by Taylor, in the appendix to his *Diegesis*, (p. 421). This pious fraud was first detected and exposed by Sir Isaac Newton.

THE "THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES" FORGERY

Bishop Clement of Alexandria, writing around 200 A. D., thus quotes a comparatively trivial and inocuous passage from the forged First Epistle of St. John (v, 7),—which, through fraudulent tampering later became one of the "chief stones of the corner" of the Holy Church that the Fathers built: "John says: 'For there are three that

bear witness, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one.' " (Clem. Alex., *Fragment from Cassiodorus*, ch. iii; *ANF.* iii, 576.) This is self-evidently the original text of this now famous, or infamous, passage. Turning now to the Word of God as found in the "Authorized" Protestant and in the Chaloner-Douay Version of the Catholic Vulgate, we read with wonder:

"7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

"8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (I John, v, 7, 8.)

Let us now turn to the same text, or what is left of it, in the Revised Version. Here we read, with more wonder (if we do not know the story of pious fraud behind it), what seems to be a garbled text:

"8. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one."

Erasmus first detected the fraud and omitted the forged verse in his edition of the Greek Testament in 1516. (*New Comm.* Pt. III, p. 718–19.) This verse 7, bluntly speaking, is a forgery: "It had been wilfully and wickedly interpolated, to sustain the Trinitarian doctrine; it has been entirely omitted by the Revisers of the New Testament." (Roberts, *Companion to the Revised Version*, p. 72.) "This memorable text," says Gibbon, "is condemned by the silence of the Fathers, ancient versions, and authentic manuscripts, of all the manuscripts now extant, above four score in number, some of which are more than 1200 years old." (Ch. xxvii, p. 598.) Speaking of this and another, Reinach says: "One of these forgeries (I John v, 7) was subjected to interpolation of a later date. . . . If these two verses were authentic, they would be an affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, at a time when the gospels, and Acts and St. Paul ignore it. It was first pointed out in 1516 that these verses were an interpolation, for they do not appear in the best manuscripts down to the fifteenth century. The Roman Church refused to bow to the evidence. . . The Congregation of the Index, on January 13, 1897, with the approbation of Leo XIII, forbade any question of the authenticity of the text re-

lating to the 'Three Heavenly Witnesses.' It showed in this instance a wilful ignorance to which St. Gregory's rebuke is specially applicable: 'God does not need our lies.' " (*Orpheus*, p. 239.) But His Church does; for without them it would not be; and without the forged "Three Heavenly Witnesses," and the forged "Baptism Formula" of Matthew (xxviii, 19), there would be not a word in the entire New Testament hinting the existence of the Three-in-One God of Christianity. The Holy Trinity is an unholy Forgery!

Lest it be thought by some pious but uninformed persons that the foregoing imputation may be either false or malicious, we shall let *CE.* make the confession of shame, with the usual clerical evasions to "save the face" of Holy Church confronted with this proven forgery and fraud. From a lengthy and detailed review, under separate headings, of all the ancient MSS., Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Old Latin, and of the Fathers, the following is condensed, but in the exact words of the text:

"The famous passage of the Three Witnesses [quoting I John, v, 7]. Throughout the past three hundred years, effort has been made to expunge from our Clementine Vulgate edition of the canonical Scriptures the words that are bracketed. Let us examine the facts of the case. [Here follows the thorough review of the MSS, closed in each instance by such words as: "The disputed part is found in none"; "no trace"; "no knowledge until the twelfth century," etc. etc.] The silence of the great and voluminous St. Augustine, [etc.] are admitted facts that militate against the canonicity of the Three Witnesses. St. Jerome does not seem to know the text,—[Jerome made the Vulgate Official Version].

"Trent's is the first certain œcumenical decree, whereby the Church established the Canon of Scripture. We cannot say that the Decree of Trent necessarily included the Three Witnesses"—[for reasons elaborately stated, and upon two conditions discussed, saying]: "Neither condition has yet been verified with certainty; quite the contrary, textual criticism seems to indicate that the *Comma Johanninum* was not at all times and everywhere wont to be read in the Catholic Church, and it is *not contained* in the Old Latin Vulgate. However, the Catholic theologian must take into account more than textual criticism"! (*CE.* viii, 436.)

A confessed forgery of Holy Writ consciously kept in the "canonical" text as a fraudulent voucher for a false Trinity—such is "The Three Heavenly Witnesses"—to the shame and ignominy of the Holy

Church of Christ, which "has never deceived any one," and which "has never made an error, and never shall err to all eternity"! This is not an error, however; it is but one more deliberate clerical "lie to the glory of God."

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH FORGERY MILL

"Nevertheless, the *forging* of papal letters *was even more frequent* in the Middle Ages than *in the early Church.*" (*CE.* ix, 203.)

LYINGLY FOUNDED ON forgery upon forgery, as has been made manifest by manifold admissions and proofs, the Church of Christ perpetuated itself and consolidated its vast usurped powers, and amassed amazing wealth, by a series of further and more secular forgeries and frauds unprecedented in human history—faintly approximated only by its initial forgeries of the fundamental gospels and epistles of the "New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and of the countless other forged religious documents which we have so far reviewed. These first relate to the infance of the Church—constitute its false certificates of Heavenly birth and of Divine civil status. They are, as it were, the livery of heaven with which Holy Church clothed its moral nakedness until it attained maturer strength and became adept to commit the most stupendous forgeries for its own self-aggrandizement and for the completer domination of mind and soul of its ignorant and superstitious subjects.

The record which we shall now expose is the most sordid in human annals,—of frauds and forgeries perpetrated for the base purposes of greed for worldly riches and power, and designed so to paralyze and stultify the minds and reason of men that they should suffer themselves to be exploited without caring or daring to question or complain, and be helpless to resist the crimes committed against them. Into this chapter we shall compress in as summary manner as possible the revolting record of Christian fraud by means of forged title deeds to vast territories, forged documents of ecclesiastical power spiritual and temporal, forged and false Saints, Martyrs, Miracles and Relics

—surpassing the power of imagination or accomplishment by any other than a divinely inspired Church which "has never deceived anyone," and which "never has erred"—in its profound, cynical knowledge and exploitation of the degraded depths of ignorance and superstition to which it had sunk its victims, and of their mental and moral incapacity to detect the holy frauds worked upon them. This was the glorious Age of Faith—the Dark Ages of human benightedness and priestly thralldom—when Holy Church was the Divinely-illumined and unique Teacher of Christendom, and when the Christian world was too ignorant to be unbelieving or heretic,—for "unbelief is no sin that ignorance was ever capable of being guilty of."

In those "Dark Ages, as the period of Catholic ascendency is justly called" (Lecky, *History of European Morals*, ii, 14), "men were credulous and ignorant," says Buckle; "they therefore produced a religion which required great belief and little knowledge." Again he says: "The only remedy for superstition is knowledge. . . . Nothing else can wipe out that plague-spot of the human mind." It was, indeed, agrees *CE.*—(from 432 to 1461)—"an age of terrible corruption and social decadence" (xiv, 318); and of its mental state it says: "To such an extent had certain imaginary concepts become the common property of the people, that they repeated themselves as auto-suggestions and dreams." (*CE.* ix, 130.) But exactly this period—the "Dark Ages of Catholic ascendency,"—with centuries before and since, was the heyday of Holy Faith and Holy Church: it may well be wondered who was responsible for such conditions, when only Holy Church existed, in plentitude of power, the inspired Teacher of Christendom? During all these centuries, "the overwhelming importance attached to *theology* diverted to it all those intellects which in another condition of society would have been employed in the investigations of science." (Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, i, 275; cf. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, I, 89.) What else could be expected, was possible, when "a boundless intolerance of all divergencies of opinion was united with an equally boundless toleration of all falsehood and deliberate fraud that could favor received opinions?" (Lecky, *History of European Morals*, ii, 15.) Indeed, "few people realize the degree in which these superstitions were encouraged by the Church which claims infallibility." (Lecky, *Hist. Rationalism*, i, 79, n.) It is confessed:

"The Church is tolerant of 'pious beliefs' which have helped to further Christianity"! (*CE.* xiv, 341.)

THE FORGED APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

For more than a thousand years, until their fraud was exposed by modern historical criticism, these voluminous and most commodious forgeries formed the groundwork and foundation of some of the most extravagant pretensions of the Church and its most potent instrument of establishment and dominion of its monarchical government *The Apostolic Constitutions*, which we have admitted for naïveté of invention with respect to the Apostolic Prince Peter and Simon Magus in their magic contests in Rome, is in fact "a fourth-century pseudo-Apostolic collection. . . . It purports to be the work of the Apostles, whose instructions, whether given by them individually or as a body, are supposed to be gathered and handed down by the pretended compiler, [Pope] St. Clement of Rome, the authority of whose name gave fictitious weight to more than one such piece of early Christian literature. . . . The Apostolic Constitutions were held generally in high esteem and served as the basis for much ecclesiastical legislation. . . . As late as 1563 . . . despite the glaring archaisms and incongruities of the collection it was contended that it was the genuine work of the Apostles . . . could yet *pretend, in an uncritical age*, to Apostolic origin." (*CE.* i, 636.)

The *Constitutions*, pretending to be written by the apostles, laid down in minute detail all the intricacies of organization of several centuries later; there being elaborate chapters "concerning bishops," presbyters, deacons, all kinds of clergy, liturgies, and Church proceedings and services, undreamed of by "apostles," or in the "apostolic age." The prescriptions regarding the selection of bishops are quite democratic, and vastly different from present papal practices; the Churches, too, are distinctly episcopal and independent. The nature of these provisions, as well as the grossly false and fraudulent character of the whole, a vast arsenal of papal aggression, may be seen by the following passage in the apostolic first person: "Wherefore we, the twelve apostles of the Lord, who are now together, give you in charge those divine constitutions *concerning every ecclesiasti-*

cal form, there being present with us Paul, the chosen vessel, our fellow apostle, and James the bishop, and the rest of the presbyters, and the seven deacons. In the first place, therefore, *I Peter say*, that a bishop to be ordained is to be, as we have already, all of us, appointed, . . . chosen by the whole people, who, when he is named and approved, let the people assemble, with the presbyters and bishops that are present, on the Lord's day, and let them give their consent. . . . And if they give their consent," etc. (*Apost. Const.* VIII, 2, iv; *ANF.* vii, 481–482.)

THE FORGED "APOSTOLIC CANONS"

From the same pious forging hand, says *CE.* (i, 637), comes the related *Apostolic Canons* (composed about 400), "a collection of ancient ecclesiastical decrees concerning the government and discipline of the Church; . . . in a word, they are a handy summary of the statutory legislation of the primitive Church. . . . They claim to be the very legislation of the Apostles themselves, at least as promulgated by their great disciple Clement. Nevertheless, their claim to genuine Apostolic origin is quite *false* and untenable. . . . The text passed into Pseudo-Isidore, and eventually Gratian included (about 1140) some excerpts of these canons in his 'Decretum,' *whereby a universal recognition and use were gained for them in the law schools.* At a much earlier date, Justinian (in his sixth Novel) had recognized them as the work of the Apostles, and confirmed them as eccclesiastical law." (*CE.* iii, 279, 280.) Here the pious priests of God palmed off these self-serving forgeries on the great but superstitious Emperor and fraudulently secured their enactment into imperial law. In the same article is a description of "a larger number of forged documents appearing about the middle of the ninth century," among which "the Capitula of Benedict Levita, Capitula Angilrammi, Canons of Isaac of Langres,—above all the collection of Pseudo-Isidore" (*Ib.* 285), which arch-forgery we shall describe in its turn.

THE FORGED LIBER PONTIFICALIS

This famous, or infamous, official fabrication, "The Book of the Popes," is notorious for its spurious accounts of the early and mythi-

cal "successors of St. Peter." The *Liber Pontificalis* purports to be "a history of the popes, beginning with St. Peter and continued down to the fifteenth century, in the form of biographies" of their respective Holinesses of Rome. (*CE.* ix, 224.) It is an official papal work, written and kept in the papal archives, and preserves for posterity the holy lives and wonderful doings of the heads of the Church universal. "Historical criticism," says *CE.*, "has for a long time dealt with this ancient text in an exhaustive way . . . especially in recent decades." The *Liber* starts off in a typically fraudulent clerical manner: "In most of its manuscript copies there is found at the beginning a *spurious correspondence* between Pope Damasus and St. Jerome. These letters *were considered genuine* in the Middle Ages. . . . Duchesne has proved exhaustively and convincingly that the first series of biographies, *from St. Peter to Felix III* (IV, died 530) were compiled at the latest under Felix's successor, Boniface II (530–532). . . . The compiler of the Liber Pontificalis utilized also *some* historical writings, a number of *apocryphal* fragments (e.g. the *Pseudo*-Clementine Recognitions), the Constitutum Sylvestri, the *spurious* Acts of the alleged Synod of the 275 Bishops under Sylvester, etc., and the fifth century Roman Acts of Martyrs. Finally, the compiler distributed arbitrarily along his list of popes a number of papal decrees taken from unauthentic sources; he likewise attributed to earlier popes liturgical and disciplinary regulations of the sixth century. . . . The authors were Roman ecclesiastics, and some were attached to the Roman Court." (*CE.* ix, 225.) The general falsity of the *Liber* is again shown and the fraudulent use made of it by the later Church forgers, thus indicated: For instances, "in the 'Liber' it is recorded that such a pope issued a decree that has been lost, or mislaid, or *perhaps never existed at all.* Isidore seized the opportunity to *supply* a pontifical letter suitable for the occasion, attributing it to the pope whose name was mentioned in the 'Liber.' " (*CE.* v. 774.) Thus confessed forgery and fraud taint to the core this basic record for some five centuries of the official "histories" and Acts of Their Holinesses of the primitive and adolescent years of the Holy Church. Pope Peter and his "Successors" for a century or more are thus again proven pious fictions and frauds.

THE "CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE" FRAUD

As several of the most monumental of these holy Church forgeries are associated with the first "Christian" Emperor, Constantine, and His contemporary Holiness, Pope Sylvester I (314–335), we may first notice the pious forged miracles which brought Constantine to Christ—rather to the Christians, and thus blightingly changed the history of the world. Constantine, Augustus of Rome, was the bastard son of the Imperator Constantius Chlorus and a Bythnian barmaid who became his mistress, and, later, by virtue of opulent gifts to the Church, was raised to Heaven as St. Helena. Constantine was a picturesque "barbarian" Pagan, with a very bloody record of family—and other—murders to his credit, mostly made to further his political ambitions. He was rival of the four Cæsars who shared the divided government, against whom he was engaged in titanic struggle, to win the sole crown of empire. The Christians were now become rather numerous in East and West, some two and a half or three millions out of the hundred millions of the Empire, sufficient to make their adherence and support important to the contestant who could gain control of them. To curry their favor and support Constantine adopted the tactics of his sportive father, Constantius, and made show of friendly disposition to them and even of possible adoption of the new faith.

The occasion and the purely selfish and superstitious motive for the alliance of Constantine with the Christians and their God, are described by the three noted Church historians of the period,—all writing after his death,—Eusebius, Socrates and Sozomen, all of whom give substantially the following account, here abbreviated from Eusebius, "Father of Church History," and an intimate of the Emperor, in his ludicrously laudatory *Life of Constantine:*

"Being convinced that he needed some more powerful aid than his military forces could afford him, on account of the wicked and *magical enchantments* which were so diligently practiced by the tyrant Maxentius, he sought divine assistance. . . . He considered, therefore, *on what God he might rely for protection and assistance.* While engaged in this enquiry, the thought occurred to him, that, of the

many emperors who had preceded him, who had rested their hopes on a multitude of gods, . . . none had *profited* at all by the pagan deities, whom they sought to propitiate . . . all had at last met with an unhappy end, . . . while the God of his father had given to him, on the other hand, manifestations of his power. . . . Reviewing, I may say, all these considerations, he judged it to be folly indeed to join in the idle worship of those who were no gods, . . . and *therefore* felt it incumbent on him to honor his father's God alone." (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine,* I, 27; *N&PNF.* I, 489; cf. Socrates, *Eccles. Hist.* I, 2; *Ib.* II, 1–2; Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.* I, 3; *Ib.* p. 241.) So, Constantine chose the Christian's God to offset the "magical enchantments" of the Pagan gods in favor of his rival, Maxentius. The Christians flocked to his court and armies, and proud prelates of the Church hung around him and flattered his hopes. After several military successes aided by the Christians, the rival armies faced for decisive contest near the historic Milvian Bridge, in the environs of Rome, in the year 312. All are familiar with the fabulous priestly story of the miraculous Fiery Cross said to have been hung out in heaven just before the battle in the sight of Constantine and all his army, blazing with the famous device "*In Hoc Signo Vinces*—By this Sign Conquer"—though it was in Greek and read "*En Touto Nika,*"—and by virtue of which Constantine was himself conquered for Christ—or for His Church.

Here we may again see the "god in the machine"—a pious Christian fraud in the making, and watch its growth from nothing in proportion of wonder from lying Father to Father as it is handed on. Very remarkable it is, that Father Bishop Eusebius wholly omits this portentous event, though he devotes a large part of Book IX and all of Book X of his *History of the Church* (written in 324), to Constantine, and enthusiastically describes the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. Although he lugs divine intervention by the Christian God into every phase of the campaign, he is content with this colorful, naïve, account: "But the emperor (Constantine), stimulated by the divine assistance, proceeded against the tyrant, and defeating him in the first, second, and third engagements, he advanced through the greatest part of Italy, and came almost to the very gates of Rome. Then God himself drew the tyrant [Maxentius], as if bound in fetters, to a considerable

distance from the gates [*i.e.* to the Milvian Bridge]; and here He confirmed those miraculous events performed of old against the wicked, and which have been discredited by so many, as if belonging to fiction and fable, but which have been established in the sacred volume, as *credible to the believer*. He confirmed them, I say, as true, by an immediate interposition of his power, addressed alike I may say to the eyes of believers and unbelievers. As, therefore, anciently in the days of Moses, the chariots of Pharaoh and his forces were cast into the Red Sea, thus also Maxentius, and his combatants and guards about him, sunk into the depths like a stone, when he fled before the power of God which was with Constantine." And, in commemoration of such signal divine aid, Constantine "immediately commanded a trophy of the Saviour's passion [a Cross] to be placed in the hand of his own statue" in Rome. (Eusebius, *HE.* IX, ix, p. 397–9.) And with all this miraculous embellishment, not a word of the Fiery Cross in Heaven, nor of the "miraculous conversion" of Constantine.

The pious fable, whether by him invented or not, is first recorded by Father Lactantius, tutor to Constantine's son Crispus before the pious father murdered his son; he tells it—after Constantine's death—in its primitive and more modest form—a simple dream by night, in which Jesus the Christ appeared to Constantine, and was seen or heard—or was fabled—to tell Constantine to decorate the shields of his soldiers with the holy "sign of the Cross" before they went into the fight; this he did and won the battle—*post hoc, ergo propter hoc.* Constantine may perhaps quite naturally have had such a dream—dreams have many vagaries, and the priests were ever at his ear. But the "heavenly sign," the Labarum or Monogram of Christ, which Constantine was by divine revelation or priestly suggestion directed to place on the shields of his soldiers, was no novel thing requiring a divine revelation, even in a dream, to suggest to the Christian priests of a Pagan emperor; "for it had been a familiar Christian symbol prior to his conversion." (*CE.* viii, 718.) By a similar divine revelation or priest-prompting, the Persian Cambyses had tied cats to the shields of his soldiers in their campaign in 525 B. C. against the cat-worshipping Egyptians, who thus dared not strike with their swords; the Christians worshipped the Cross of which the Pagans were superstitiously

afraid, as we have seen from Father Lactantius. The result was at least the same, as related by Father Lactantius:

"And now a civil war broke out between Constantine and Maxentius. . . . At length Constantine . . . led his whole forces to the neighborhood of Rome, and encamped them opposite to the Milvian Bridge. . . . Constantine was *directed in a dream* to cause the *heavenly sign* to be delineated on the shields of his soldiers, and to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded, and he marked on their shields the letter X, with a perpendicular line drawn through it and turned round thus at the top, being the cipher of Christ. . . . The bridge in the rear (of Maxentius) was broken down. The *hand of the Lord prevailed*, and the forces of Maxentius were routed." (Lact., *On the Death of the Persecutors*, ch. xliv; *ANF.* vii, 318.)

These Christ-monogram crosses were probably, to the mind's eye of Lactantius, simple wooden or painted miniatures like the more life-sized one which a modern Holiness specially exorcised and sent along as an amulet or pious fetich of success on a recent disastrous Polar Expedition. But by the time Bishop Eusebius came on to embellish the tale, the model at least was a thing truly of beauty and wonder. In his *Life of Constantine*, the holy Bishop, who was on the Emperor's pay-roll, thus in substance relates:

"Constantine, having resolved to liberate Rome from the tyranny of Maxentius, and having meditated on the unhappiness of those who worshipped a multitude of idols, as contrasted with the good fortune of his own father Constantius, who had favoured Christianity, resolved to worship the One True God; and while he was in prayer to God that He would reveal Himself to him, and stretch forth His right hand to succor him, he had a vision after midday, when the sun was declining, in a luminous form over the sun, and an inscription annexed to it, '*Touto Nika*'—(*by this conquer*), and at the sight of it he and all his forces were astounded, who *were spectators of the miracle*. . . . The following night, when Constantine was asleep, Christ appeared to him with that sign, which had been displayed to him in the heavens, and commanded him to make a standard according to the pattern of what he had seen, and to use it as a defense against his enemies; and as soon as it was day Constantine called together the workers in gold and precious stones, and ordered them to fashion it accordingly"—

(it being, by his description, certainly rich, if not gaudy). And Bishop Eusebius states that Constantine, "a long time after the event, *affirmed with an oath the truth* of what the Bishop had recorded" of this wonderful unhistorical fact. (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 26–31; *N&PNF*. i, 489–491; *CE*. viii, 717–8; Wordsworth, *op. cit*. i, 358–9.) In a note to the last reference, the acute Protestant clerical mind, in eager defense of even the most absurd Catholic fables, is seen at play: "It has been objected (by Dean Milman and others) that it is incredible that a warlike motto on the Cross, converted into a military standard, should be suggested by Him who is Prince of Peace. But He Who is Prince of Peace is also Lord of Hosts; and Christ is revealed not only in the Psalms, but also in the Apocalypse, as a Mighty Warrior going forth conquering and to conquer." Clerical persons are really Funny-mentalists!

The pious Bishop Eusebius, exemplar of Christian historical unveracity to the glory of God and Church, begins his *Life of Constantine* with this rhapsody over Constantine dead: "When I raise my thoughts even to the arch of heaven, and there contemplate his thrice-blessed soul in communion with God himself, freed from every mortal and earthly vesture, and shining in a refulgent robe of light, honoured with an ever-blooming crown, and an immortality of endless and blessed existence, I stand as it were without power of speech or thought and unable to utter a single phrase, but condemning my own weakness, and imposing silence on myself, I resign the task of speaking his praises worthily to the immortal God, who alone has power to confirm his own sayings." (Eusebius, *Life*, I, 2; *N&PNF*. i, 481–2.)

Here is the thrice-blessed Holy Emperor's record before he was "freed from every mortal and earthly vesture," and before his blood-stained earthly vestments were exchanged for that refulgent robe of light in which he communed with God himself; this record is of the one item only of family murderings: Maximian, his wife's father, 310; Bassianus, his sister Anastasia's husband, 314; Licinianus, his nephew, son of his sister Constantina, 319; Fausta, his wife, in a bath of boiling water, 320; Sopater, Pagan philosopher and his former intimate Counsellor, 321; Licinius, his colleague Cæsar and his sister Constantina's husband, 325; with this last, and the beheading of his own son Crispus, 326, he fitly inaugurated and consecrated the cele-

brated Council of Nicæa, which he invoked to settle the famous puzzle, whether Jesus Christ, the Son, being born of the Father, were not consequently less ancient than his Sire, so that there was a time when the Begotten Son did not exist, and whether they were "of the same substance," or different. It may be noticed, that the devout "Christian" Emperor regarded this as a trifling matter of dispute not justifying the terrible row which it kicked up among the clericals, splitting the subjects of the Empire into throat-cutting factions for four centuries. In his opening Address to the Council which he called to establish peace among the priests, he turned to Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and to Arius, his presbyter, and their respective howling factions, and declared: "I understand, then, that the origin of this controversy is this—[the question stated by Alexander on this point, and the negative reply of Arius]. Let therefore both the unguarded question and the inconsiderate answer receive your mutual forgiveness. . . . For as long as you continue to contend about *these small and insignificant questions*, it is not fitting that so large a portion of God's people should be under the direction of your judgment, since you are thus divided among yourselves"! (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II, 69–71; *N&PNF*. i, 516–7.)

With respect to the Christian Emperor's murderings, the good Bishop Lardner, with truly Christian modern moderation, admits that the murderous atrocities of Constantine above listed "seem to cast a reflection upon him"! But the holy Emperor was truly conscientious and scrupulously concerned for his soul's salvation on account of them; for it is recorded by the Church historian Sozomen, that Constantine is said to have sought first Pagan, then Christian, absolution from these murders, first from Sopater, then from the Christian bishops. He relates the anxious solicitations of the murderer thus: "It is reported by the Pagans that Constantine, after slaying some of his nearest relations, and particularly after assenting to the murder of his own son Crispus, repented of the evil deeds, and inquired of Sopater, the philosopher, concerning the means of purification from guilt. The philosopher, so the story goes, replied that such moral defilement could admit of no purification. The Emperor was grieved at this repulse; but happening to meet some bishops who told him that he would be cleansed from sin, on repentance and on baptism, he was

delighted with their representations, and admired their doctrines, and became a Christian, and *led his subjects to the same faith.* It appears to me that this story was the invention of persons who desired to vilify the Christian religion. . . . It cannot be imagined the philosopher was ignorant that *Hercules* obtained purification at Athens by the celebration of the mysteries of Ceres after the murder of his children, and of Iphitus, his guest and friend. That the Greeks held that purification from guilt of this nature could be obtained, is obvious from the instance I have just alleged, and he is a false calumniator who represents that Sopater taught the contrary, . . . for he was at that period esteemed the most learned man in Greece." (Sozomen, i, 5; ii, 242–3.) It is said that the rebuff of Sopater denying Pagan absolution was the motive of his murder by the Christian Emperor. Howbeit, Constantine cautiously denied himself the saving Christian rite of baptism until he was on his deathbed, in Nicomedia, in the year of his forgiving Lord 337. (Euseb., *Life*, iv, 62; Soc., i, 39; Soz., ii, 34; *CE.* i, 709.) But none can deny the superiority of Christianity over Paganism in this point of saving grace. The Christian historian, however, clearly avers that some of the divinest sacraments of Christian Revelation, forgiveness of sin by God and absolution per priests, were ancient features of the Pagan "Mysteries," of which even sinful Pagan demigods might be the beneficiaries.

But "the mighty and victorious Constantine, adorned with every virtue of religion, with his most pious son, Crispus Cæsar, resembling in everything his father,"—as his doxology is sung—before the murder of Crispus—by good Bishop Eusebius (*HE.* ix, p. 443),—was rather dubiously a "practicing" Christian; he remained until death Pontifex Maximus, or Sovereign Pontiff of the Pagan religion, a title which the Christian Bishops could not erogate until the Christian Emperors abandoned it; he ordered the auspices or divination by inspection of the entrails of birds, and on his death, amply baptized with blood and by the deathbed heretic Christian rite, he was apotheosized according to Pagan custom and raised as a god to heaven—to rank along with his Christian Sainted Mother, St. Helena, of whom more anon.

In this ecstatic vision of the celestial beatitude of Constantine, the good Bishop Eusebius was, from the orthodox or "right-thinking"

viewpoint sadly mistaken. Constantine went unshriven to Hell and everlasting torment; not indeed for his crimes but for his errant creed, as a disbeliever in the Divinity of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Trinity —which, indeed, had not been yet invented. The majority of the Council of Nicæa had by force and terrorism decreed that Jesus Christ was of the "same substance" as his father God, co-eternal and co-equal, *ergo* also God. But Constantine heretically disbelieved this inspired dogma; he banished Athanasius and other "Trinitarian" prelates; even "the death of Arius did not stay the plague. Constantine now favored none but Arians; he was baptized in his last moments by the shifty [Arian] prelate of Nicomedia; and he bequeathed to his three sons [themselves either Pagans or Arian heretics] an empire torn by dissensions which his *weakness and ignorance* had aggravated." (*CE.* i, 709.) To such a "weak and ignorant" Emperor is due, however, the salvation of Christianity from oblivion, and upon him is lavished the adulations of the now "indefectible Church" which his favor alone made possible. As for the pious Bishop Eusebius, he was himself an Arian heretic, and from his point of view he may have thought that he visioned Constantine glorious in Heaven. So much for divergent religious standpoints, which at the first Church Council "proved a beginning of strife, . . . bequeathed an empire torn with dissensions, . . . [until] the Catholic bishops, the monks, the *sword* of Clovis, and *the action of the Papacy*, made an end of it before the eighth century" (*CE.* i, 710),—thus nearly four hundred years of throat-cutting and persecutions before Constantine was finally proved a villainous heretic, the fatal effects of his "weakness and ignorance" overcome, and "Catholic Truth" began to assume its full sway undisputed through the long intellectual night of the Christian Dark Ages of Faith.

CHRISTIAN FORGERIES FOR POWER AND PELF

The "league with Death and covenant with Hell" whereby the new Paganism called Christianity became the official State religion being now signed and sealed, and soon enforced by laws of bloody persecution, we shall now admire the most monumental of the holy forgeries by which the Church consolidated its vast and nefast

dominion over the minds and bodies of the quickly degraded populations under its sway.

THE "CONSTANTINE" FORGERIES

A series of Church forgeries of the greatest magnitude and most far-reaching evil consequences grew up around the name of Constantine, forged in his name or falsely associated with it in the nefarious work of almost limitless larceny of territorial possessions and of papal sovereignty. A bit of historical background is necessary to properly appreciate the underground workings of Providence in disposing the success of these designs,—whereby, as said by Dr. McCabe, "Pope Adrian I induced Charlemagne to found the papal states by producing two of the most notorious and most shameless forgeries ever perpetrated: 'The Acts of St. Sylvester,' and 'The Donation of Constantine,' documents which mendaciously represented the emperor Constantine as giving most of Italy to the papacy, and which were fabricated in Rome in the eighth century and were used by the popes to maintain this gigantic fraud."

The intricate intriguing and conspiracies of the embryo papacy under their Holinesses Zacharias, Stephen II, Adrian I, Leo III, and of the semi-barbarian aspirants for the Frankish monarchy, Clovis, Charles Martel, Pepin, Charlemagne, cannot be here recounted. According to the picturesque account of Bishop St. Gregory of Tours—whose History is a thesaurus of the revolting social and moral degradation of the times, Clovis was converted as the result of his vow to the God of his Christian wife Clotilda, that if victory were granted to him in a great battle against the Alemanni, in which he was hard pressed, he would become a Christian. Miracles at once attested the Divine favor: "St. Martin showed him a ford over the Vienne by means of a hind; St. Hilary preceded his armies in a column of fire." (Von Ranke, i, 12.) It will be remembered that all the barbarian nations of the time were "heretic" Christians of the hated Arian sect, who denied the divinity of Christ and derided the Holy Trinity; the Franks thus became the only "orthodox" Christians and the defenders of the True Faith on behalf of the Popes. Winning the fight, Clovis and 3000 of his army were baptized on Christmas day by Bishop St. Remigius of

Rheims. When this good Bishop came to perform the baptismal ceremony on the king in the cathedral of Rheims, "the chrism for the baptismal ceremony was missing, and *was brought from heaven* in a vase (ampulla) borne by a dove. This is what is known as the Sainte Ampoule of Rheims, preserved in the treasury of the Cathedral of that City, and used for the coronation of the kings of France from Philip Augustus down to Charles X"! (*CE.* v, 71.)

FORGED DEEDS OF EMPIRE

The Merovingian kings of the Franks had become mere puppets in the hands of their "Mayors of the Palace," in league with the bishops of Rome. At last "Pepin addressed to the pope the suggestive question: 'In regard to the Kings of the Franks who no longer possess the royal power, is this state of things proper?' . . . Pope Zacharias replied that such a state of things was not proper—[that "he should be king who possessed the royal power"]. *After this decision the place Pepin desired was declared vacant.* . . . Still this external coöperation of the pope in the transfer of the Kingdom would necessarily *enhance the importance of the Church.* Pepin was also obliged to acknowledge the increased power of the Church by calling on it for moral [?] support." (*CE.* xi, 663.) In pay or reward for this "moral support" given by the Church, Pepin, it is said, gave to the Church some considerable territories around Rome, which at the incitation of the Pope he had wrested by arms from the neighboring Lombards.

THE FORGED LETTER OF ST. PETER

To this alleged gift Pepin was induced not alone by the sentiment of guilty gratitude to Zacharias and Stephen, the latter of whom crowned him King of the Franks in 751; for further persuasion His Holiness Stephen II procured from the Vatican Forgery Mill the identical autograph letter of St. Peter himself, prophetically addressed "To the King of the Franks," and so mystically worded that: "When Stephen II performed the ceremony of anointing Pepin and his son at St. Denis, it was St. Peter who was regarded as the mystical giver of the secular power"! (*CE.* xi, 663.) This cunning Papal

forgery and fraud is thus described by a high authority: "The pontiff . . . dictated his letter in the name of the apostle Peter, closely imitating his epistles, and speaking in a language which implied that he was possessed of an authority to anoint or dethrone kings, and to perform the offices, not of a messenger, of a teacher sent from God, which is the highest characteristic of an apostle, but of a delegated minister of His power and justice." (*Historians' History of the World*, vol. viii, p. 557.)

Also: "The Frankish king received the title of the former representative of the Byzantine Empire in Italy, *i. e.* 'Patricius,' and was also assigned the *duty of protecting the privileges* of the Holy See. . . . After the acknowledgment of his territorial claims the pope was in reality a ruling sovereign, but he had placed himself under the protection of the Frankish ruler, and had sworn that he and his people would be true to the king" (*CE.* xi, 663),—the divine birthright thus swapped for a mess of political potage: for over a thousand years since it has been a mess indeed. Thus by conspiracy, fraud, and unrighteous conquest was laid the foundation of the sacred "Patrimony of Peter," and the unholy league between the papacy and the French kings, which reached full fruition in the holy massacres of the Albigenses, of the Vendée, and of St. Bartholomew.

A HOLY CONSPIRATION

The next step in the progress "conquering and to conquer" of Christ's prostituted Church was on a broader stage and with yet vaster consequences. Pepin died in 768, dividing his realms between his two sons, Carloman and Charles, later "by the Grace of God" and great villainy known to fame as Charles the Great or Charlemagne; Charles receiving the German part, Carloman the French. On the death of Carloman, in 771, Charles seized the Frankish kingdom. The widow and young heirs of Carloman fled for protection and aid to Desiderius, king of the Lombards, part of whose stolen territory the pope held for God and Church. Desiderius was also father of the repudiated first wife of Charles; the holy matrimonial mess is thus defined: "Charles was already, *in foro conscientiæ*, if not in Frankish law, wedded to Himiltrude. In defiance of the pope's protest, Charles

married Desiderata, daughter of Desiderius (770); three years later he repudiated her and married Hildegarde, the beautiful Swabian. Naturally, Desiderius was furious at this insult, and the dominions of the Holy See bore the first brunt of his wrath." (*CE.* iii, 612.) Charles thereupon "had to protect Rome against the Lombard"; finally the Lombards were "put to utter rout"; Charles proceeded to Rome; and "history records with vivid eloquence the first visit of Charles to the Eternal City. . . . Charles himself forgot pagan Rome and prostrated himself to kiss the threshold of the Apostles, and then spent seven days in conference with the successor of Peter. It was then that he undoubtedly *formed many great designs for the glory of God and the exaltation of Holy Church,* which, in spite of human weaknesses, and, still more, *ignorance,* he did his best to realize." (*Ib.* 612.) The principal fruit of this weakness and ignorance of Charles seems to be that he could so easily let himself be duped by His Holiness through the enormous forgeries for Christ's sake that were now imposed upon him. In 774 Charles finally defeated Desiderius and "assumed the crown of Lombardy, and renewed to Adrian [now Holiness of Rome] the donation of territory made by Pepin." The "genuineness of this donation," as well as of "the original gift of Pepin," have been much questioned, says *CE.*, but are "now generally admitted,"—which is none too assuring; but another document, this time favorable to Charles, is just the other way: "The so-called 'Privilegium Hadriani pro Carolo' granting him full right to nominate the pope and to invest all bishops, is a *forgery.*" (*CE.* xi, 612). Here is precisely the reason and only effective use of this forged "Donation of Constantine"—it was the basis for the inducement to Charlemagne to win the Lombard territories for the Church and to reinstate it in the "Patrimony of Peter," largely swollen by the pretended new gifts of the ambitious king, who, in the seven days' conference with His Holiness, had, undoubtedly, formed together "some great designs for the glory of God and the exaltation of Holy Church," now begun to be realized.

The quarter of a century passed, and much history was made. The Roman emperors ruled from Constantinople; Roman popes and kings were legitimately their liegemen; "the Emperor of Constantinople, legitimate heir of the imperial title," now becomes the victim

of papal and kingly conspiration, thus brought to its climax: "On Christmas Day, 800, took place the principal event of the life of Charles. During the Pontifical Mass celebrated before the high altar beneath which lay the bodies of Sts. Peter and Paul, the pope (Leo III) approached him, placed upon his head the imperial crown, did him formal reverence after the ancient manner, saluted him as Emperor and Augustus and anointed him," while the Roman rabble shouted its approval. Thus, again by collusion and usurpation, began that Holy Roman Empire, of nefast history, which Bryce qualifies as "neither holy, nor Roman, nor empire"; but the Vicars of God were now well started on their way to worldly grandeur and moral degradation. Now for their forgeries.

THE POPE SYLVESTER FORGERIES

The monumental forgeries which were boldly used by their Holinesses to dupe Charlemagne and Christendom into recognizing the papal claim of right of ownership and sovereignty over a great part of Italy are a series of spurious documents harking in pretended date and origin back to the "first Christian emperor" Constantine and to His Holiness Pope St. Sylvester (314–335). About the name of Sylvester arose "the Sylvester Legend later surrounded with *that network of myth*, that gave rise to the *forged document* known as the Donation of Constantine." (*CE.* xiv, 257.) This fable, says Prof. Shotwell, "made its way, gathering volume as it went, reënforced eventually by a forged Donation, until it had imposed upon all Europe the conception of Sylvester as the potent influence behind Constantine's most striking measures and of Constantine himself as the dutiful servant of the See of Peter." (*See of Peter*, xxvi.) The extensive variety but common general nature of these Sylvester forgeries is thus indicated:

"At an early date legend brings Pope St. Sylvester into close relationship with the first Christian emperor, but in a way that is contrary to historical fact. These legends were introduced especially into the 'Vita beati Sylvestri,' and in the 'Constitutum Sylvestri'—an apocryphal account of an alleged Roman council which belongs to the Symmachian forgeries and appeared between 501 and 508, and

also in the 'Donatio Constantini.' The accounts given in all these writings concerning the persecution of Sylvester, the healing and baptism of Constantine, the emperor's gift to the pope, the rights granted to the latter, and the council of 275 bishops at Rome, are entirely legendary" (*CE.* xiv, 370–371).

THE FORGED "DONATION OF CONSTANTINE"

"Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,
Which the first wealthy Father gained from thee!"
Dante, *Inferno,* xix, 115.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia,* artless revealer of the frauds of the Church for which it is an authorized spokesman, gives this account of the famous *Donatio Constantini,* which is describes as "*a forged document* of Emperor Constantine the Great, by which large privileges and rich possessions were conferred on the pope and the Roman Church. . . . It is addressed by Constantine to Pope Sylvester I (314–35), and consists of two parts. . . . Constantine is made to confer on Sylvester and his successors the following privileges and possessions: the pope, as successor of St. Peter, has the primacy over the four Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, also over all the bishops in the world. . . . The document goes on to say that for himself the Emperor has established in the East a new capital which bears his name, and thither he removes his capital, since it is inconvenient that a secular emperor have power where God has established the residence of the head of the Christian religion. The document concludes with maledictions against all who violate these donations and with the *assurance that the emperor has signed them with his own hand and placed them on the tomb of St. Peter.* This document is without doubt a *forgery,* fabricated somewhere between the years 750 and 850. As early as the 15th century *its falsity was known and demonstrated.* . . . Its genuinity was yet occasionally defended, and the *document still further used as authentic,* until Baronius in his Annales Ecclesiastici admitted that the 'Donatio' was a forgery, whereafter it was soon universally admitted to be such. It is so clearly a fabrication that there is no reason to

wonder that, with the *revival of historical criticism* in the 15th century, the true character of the document was at once recognized. . . . The document obtained wider circulation by its incorporation with the 'False Decretals' (840–850)." (*CE.* v, 118, 119, 120.)

By Lord Bryce a graphic sketch of this notorious fraud is given, with comments as to the mental and moral qualities of the priestcraft which it reflects. It is, he says, the—"most stupendous of medieval forgeries, which under the name of Donation of Constantine commanded for seven centuries the unquestioning belief of mankind. Itself a portentous falsehood, it is the most unimpeachable evidence of the thoughts and beliefs of the priesthood which framed it, sometime between the middle of the eighth and the middle of the tenth century. It tells how Constantine the Great, cured of his leprosy by the prayers of Sylvester, resolved, on the fourth day of his baptism, to forsake the ancient seat for a new capital on the Bosphorus, lest the continuance of the secular government should cramp the freedom of the spiritual, and how he bestowed therewith upon the Pope and his successors the sovereignty over Italy and the countries of the West." (Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, Ch. vii, p. 97; Latin text, extracts, p. 98.) In addition to these extraordinary investitures, all forms of imperial pomp, privileges and dignities were spuriously granted to the Pope and his clerics, "all of them enjoyed by the Emperor and his senate, all of them showing the same desire to make the pontifical a copy of the imperial office. The Pope is to inhabit the Lateran palace, to wear the diadem, the collar, the purple cloak, to carry the scepter, and to be attended by a body of chamberlains. Similarly his clergy are to ride on white horses and receive the honors and immunities of the senate and patricians," including "the practice of kissing the pope's foot, adopted in imitation of the old imperial court." (*Ib.* pp. 97–98.)

The grossness and absurdity of these stupendous forgeries, with their pious recitals of Constantine's leprosy cured by Sylvester's prayers, the consequent conversion and baptism of the Emperor in the Lateran font, and the abandonment of Rome by Constantine in order to leave it free for God's Vicar, just up from the catacombs, to ape imperial pomp, is made manifest by a moment's notice of dates, and recollection of contemporary history. Sylvester's Holiness dates from 314, he died in 335; Constantine in 337. Constantine's "conver-

sion" by the "In Hoc Signo" miracle, was in 312, before Sylvester became pope; at no time did Constantine have leprosy, other than moral, therefore no physical cure was wrought by Sylvester's prayers, and certainly no moral cleansing worthy of note; Constantine was not baptized by Sylvester in Rome, but heretically received that rite long after Sylvester's death, and just before his own, in Nicomedia of Asia Minor. (*CE.* i, 709.) But Christians were too sodden in ignorance to know these things, and it was only with the "revival of historical criticism" which marked the beginning of the end of the Ages of Faith, that the truth was disclosed, or could have been perceived. In words that blast and sear with infamy the perpetrators and the conscious beneficiaries of this monumental fraud and forgery, Gibbon says:

"Fraud is the resource of weakness and cunning; and the strong, though ignorant barbarian, was often entangled in the net of sacerdotal policy. . . . The Decretal and the Donation of Constantine, the two magical pillars of the spiritual and temporal monarchy of the popes. This memorable donation was first introduced to the world by an epistle of Adrian the first, who exhorts Charlemagne to imitate the liberality, and revive the name, of the great Constantine. . . . So deep was the ignorance and credulity of the times, that the most absurd of fables was received, with equal reverence, in Greece and in France, and is still enrolled among the decrees of the canon law. The emperors, and the Romans, were incapable of discerning a forgery, that subverted their rights and freedom. . . . The popes themselves have indulged a smile at the credulity of the vulgar; *but a false and obsolete title still sanctifies* their reign; and, by the same fortune which has attended the decretals and the Sibylline Oracles, *the edifice has subsisted after the foundations have been undermined.*" (Gibbon, *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire,* ch. xiv, pp. 740, 741, 742.)

The falsity of the *Donation* was first alleged and proved, in 1440, by the acute Humanist critic Lorenzo Valla, who has the exposure of more than one Church forgery to his credit, and who narrowly escaped the Holy Inquisition; and yet the document "*was still used as authentic*" by Holy Church until the great Churchman critic Baronius forced the confession of the fraud, but the Church still for centuries clung to the fruits of its fraud, and would not give them up, with their revenues

and rotten "sovereignty." The ancient forgery of "Donation" was finally canceled by Italian patriot bayonets in 1870, and the stolen territories of "Peter's Patrimony" restored to United Italy. That these Papal territories were not of "divine" right, nor of even forged muniments which can be plausibly urged, is thus confessed: "All of this, of course, is based upon painstaking *deductions* since no document has come down to us either from the time of Charlemagne or from that of Pepin." (*CE.* xiv, 261.) This is confirmed, and the precarious nature of the usurped tenure thus stated: "Nominally, Adrian I (772–775) was now monarch of about two-thirds of the Italian peninsula, but his sway was little more than nominal. . . . It was in no slight degree owing to Adrian's political sagacity, vigilance, and activity, that *the temporal power of the Papacy did not remain a fiction of the imagination.* . . . The temporal power of the popes, of which Adrian I must be considered the real founder." (*CE.* i, 155–156.)

In a paragraph which gives a word of credit to Valla for his exposure of the forgeries of the "Donation" and the immense and remarkable "Pseudo-Areopagite" Forgeries, previously mentioned, the vast extent of the output of the Vatican Forgery-Mill—and the evil persistence of the Church in clinging to them after exposure, is thus admitted: "Lorenzo Valla, 1440, counselled Eugenius IV not to rely on the Donation of Constantine, which he *proved to be spurious.* . . . It was Valla who first denied the authenticity of those writings which for centuries had been going about as the treatises composed by Dionysius the Areopagite. *Three centuries later* the Benedictines of St. Maur and the Bollandists *were still engaged in sifting out the true from the false in patristic literature,* in hagiology, in the story of the foundation of local churches" (*CE.* xii, 768),—such Liars of the Lord were the pious parasites of Holy Church.

THE "SYMMACHIAN FORGERIES"

Among the sheaf of forged documents above confessed by *CE.* are the so-called "Symmachian Forgeries," forged by or in behoof of His Holiness Pope St. Symmachus (498–514), products of the Church Forgery Mill operated by the Pope to further papal pretentions of the independence of the Bishops of Rome from the just criticisms and

judgment of ecclesiastical tribunals, and putting them above law clerical and secular. Whenever there was need for false precedents, a simple turn of the crank of the wheel of the papal forgery-mill produced them just to order. Thus, in this instance: "During the dispute between Pope St. Symmachus and the anti-pope Laurentius, the adherents of Symmachus drew up four apocryphal writings called the 'Symmachian Forgeries'. . . . The object of these forgeries was to produce alleged instances from earlier times to support the whole procedure of the adherents of Symmachus, and, in particular, the position that the Roman bishop could not be judged by any court composed of other bishops." (*CE.* xiv, 378.) Our Confessor is careful twice to impute these confessed forgeries to the "adherents" of His Holiness; but they were forged for him, used, of course with his knowledge and consent, to further his cause in the dispute; they are thus distinctly forgeries by His Holiness.

THE "FALSE DECRETALS" FORGERIES

A "record of forgery in the interest of the Church which resembles nothing else in history," in the words of Dr. McCabe, has so far been presented; the climax and capstone is now to be seen in what Voltaire terms "the boldest and most magnificent forgery which has deceived the world for centuries," the so-called "False Decretals of Isidore." While it is true, as said by Reinach, that "never yet has the papacy acknowledged that for 1000 years it made use of forged documents for its own benefit," yet we have seen a thousand confessions of the *fact* of forgery, and either the admission or the inevitable inference, that they were used by the Church in the fraudulent obtention of viciously illicit ends. The following brief paragraph of further confession from *CE.*, is pregnant with suggestion of the moral depravity of popes and priests, the whole Church, the sodden ignorance of the votaries of Holy Church, cleric and lay, the darkness of the life of mind and spirit till at the "Renaissance" men were reborn indeed, and after slow and painful growth of learning and of freeing from fear, began to expose the Church in its forgeries, frauds, and vices. The tone of *CE.* is quite apologetical for this particular monument of Church fraud; it seeks palliation in the conditions of ignorance of

the Middle Ages; but it forgets that Holy Church purposely produced this ignorance, and that Popes and Church are illumined by the Holy Ghost of their God against all ignorance and error so that its "Church never has erred and never shall": but maybe this statement is itself an error. *CE.* now speaks for this gigantic fraud of Holy Church, the False Isidorian Decretals:

"Isidorian Decretals is the name given to certain apocryphal letters contained in a collection of canon laws composed about the middle of the ninth century. . . . Nowadays every one agrees that these *so-called papal letters are forgeries.* These documents, *about 100 in number,* appeared suddenly in the ninth century and are nowhere mentioned before that time. . . . The pseudo-Isidore makes use of documents written long after the times of the popes to whom he attributed them. The popes of the first three centuries are made to quote documents that did not appear until the fourth or fifth century, etc. Then again there are endless anachronisms. The *Middle Ages were deceived by this huge forgery,* but during the *Renaissance men of learning* and the canonists generally *began to recognize the fraud.* . . . Nevertheless the *official edition* of the 'Corpus Juris,' in 1580, upheld the genuineness of the false decretals." (*CE.* vi, 773.) But the God-guided Vicars of God knew they were forgeries.

"Upon these spurious decretals," says Hallam, "was built the great fabric of papal supremacy over the different national churches; a fabric which has stood after its foundations crumbled beneath it; for no one has pretended to deny, for the last two centuries, that the imposture is too palpable for any but *the most ignorant ages* to credit." (*History of the Middle Ages,* Bk. VII, ch. ii, 99.) Though on their face affecting only matters spiritual and causes ecclesiastical, they soon had all Europe strangled as in the tentacles of a giant octopus, by a process thus described by Lord Bryce: "By the invention and adoption of the False Decretals it (the Church) had provided itself with a legal system suited to any emergency, and which gave it unlimited authority through the Christian world in causes spiritual and over persons ecclesiastical. Canonical ingenuity found it easy in one way or another to make this include all causes and persons whatsoever; for crime is always and wrong is often sin, nor can aught be done anywhere which may not affect the clergy." (*Holy*

Roman Empire, ch. x, 152.) "The Forgery," says Dr. Draper, "produced an immense extension of papal power, it displaced the old Church government, divesting it of the republican attributes it had possessed, and transforming it into an absolute monarchy. It brought the bishops into subjection to Rome, and made the pontiff the supreme judge of the whole Christian world. It prepared the way for the great attempt, subsequently made by Hildebrand, to convert the states of Europe into a theocratic priest-kingdom, with the pope at its head." (*Conflict between Religion and Science*, ch. x, 271.)

The false pretense back of the huge forgery was that the documents included were genuine papal letters and decretals of the earliest popes, thus carrying back the Church's late pretensions to the very first of the Church and to the pretended and fictitious associates and "successors" of Peter. These spurious documents are taken up seriatim by the critical Father Dupin, as outlined in *ANF.*, viii, and each in its turn pronounced a forgery. From the "Introductory Notice to the Decretals," I think it pertinent to quote the following paragraph:

"These frauds, which, pretending to be a series of 'papal edicts' from Clement and his successors during the *ante-Nicene ages*, are, in fact, the manufactured product of the *ninth century*,—the most stupendous imposture of the world's history, the most successful and the most stubborn in its hold upon enlightened nations. Like the mason's framework of lath and scantlings, on which he turns an arch of massive stone, the Decretals served their purpose, enabling Nicholas I to found the Papacy by their insignificant aid. That swelling arch of vanity once reared, the framework might be knocked out; but the fabric stood, and has borne up every weight imposed upon it for ages. Its strong abutments have been *ignorance and despotism.* Nicholas produced his *flimsy framework of imposture*, and amazed the whole Church by the audacity of the claims he founded upon it. The age, however, was unlearned and uncritical; and, in spite of remonstrances from France under lead of Hincmar, bishop of Rheims, the West patiently submitted to the overthrow of the ancient Canons and the Nicene Constitutions, and bowed to the yoke of a new canon law, of which these frauds were not only made an integral, but the essential, part. The East never accepted them for a moment. . . . The Papacy created the Western schism, and contrived to call it 'the

schism of the Greeks.' The Decretals had created the Papacy, and they enabled the first Pope to assume that communion with himself was the test of Catholic communion: hence his excommunication of the Easterns, which, after brief intervals of relaxation, settled into the chronic schism of the Papacy, and produced the awful history of the medieval Church in Western Europe." (*ANF.* viii, 601.)

THE FORGED DECRETUM OF GRATIAN

Great and pernicious as were the influences of the forged Isidorian Decretals, there yet remained a step to bring the Forger Church to the height of its age-old ambitious scheme to completely imitate the olden Roman Empire and dominate the world. "The School of Bologna had just revived the study of Roman law; Gratian sought to inaugurate a similar study of canon law. But while compilations of texts and official collections were available for Roman law, or 'Corpus juris civilis,' Gratian had no such assistance. He therefore adopted the plan of inserting the texts in the body of his general treatise; from the disordered mass of canons, collected from the earliest days, he selected the law actually in force. . . . The *science of canon law* was at length established." (*CE.* ix, 57.) But this disordered mass out of which Gratian selected was very largely the old forged reliances of the Church; thus in making his selections "Gratian alleges *forged* decretals" (*CE.* iv, 1),—including the Constantine Donation, the Isidore forgeries, *etc.* Yet, withal, "the 'Decretum' of Gratian was considered in the middle of the twelfth century as a *corpus juris canonici, i. e.* a code of ecclesiastic laws then in force." (*CE.* iv, 671.) It clinched the rivets in the forged fetters of the Church upon the neck of Christendom, and sanctioned the principles which in the next century were invoked to found and justify the Holy Inquisition. Of this celebrated document, the beginning of the "science" of Church legistic sophistry, Draper says: "The most potent instrument of the new papal system was Gratian's Decretum, which was issued about the middle of the Twelfth Century. It was a mass of fabrications. It made the whole Christian world, through the papacy, the domain of the Italian clergy. It inculcated that it is *lawful to constrain men to goodness, to torture and execute heretics, and to confiscate their property; that to kill an*

excommunicated person is not murder; that the pope, in *his unlimited superiority to all law, stands on an equality with the Son of God.*" (*Conflict between Science and Religion,* ch. x, p. 273.)

THE FULL FRUITION OF FORGERY

As said by Dr. McCabe: "There was no need of further forgeries. Now securely established on its basis of forged donations of temporal power and territory, forged decretals stating its spiritual powers, and forged lives of saints and martyrs, the papacy was so strong and prosperous that the popes actually dreamed of forming a sort of United States of Europe with themselves as virtual presidents. Nearly every country was in some ingenious way made out to be a fief of the Papacy and bound to recognize the Pope as its feudal monarch." (*LBB.* 1130, 44–5.)

Founding thus its religion, that newer form of Paganism called Christianity, on falsehood and forged "Scripture" documents; its pretensions to superiority and "primacy" on gross "interpolations" into the forged Scriptures; its spurious claims to territorial possessions and temporal sovereignty upon forged title-deeds and Donations; its "spiritual" and legal domination upon forged Church law and constitutions,—thus was the visible Church of Christ brought to the perfection of its power and degradation. For fifteen hundred years every document under which it claimed, it forged; it forged until it had no longer need of forgery, for nothing was left to forge; forged so long as it could forge with impunity, for with the Renaissance its old forgeries began to be discovered and exposed, and it could commit undetected no further documentary forgeries.

Such is the objective side, as it were, of the Christian religion and its Church. Its subjective side, the subjugation of its victims by imposed ignorance and superstition, through limitless forgeries of miracles, martyrs, saints and relics, remains to be briefly noticed as a sort of by-product of the Holy Church Forgery Mill.

THE FRUSTRATED EMS REVOLT

Not to mention the revolt known as the "Reformation," the discovery of the unholy and criminal practices of the Church in the

matter of its claims of primacy and jurisdiction, as defined in the Isidorian False Decretals, led to one tardy and half-way ecclesiastical effort of revolt within the Roman Church, which might have developed into something worth while to humanity as a whole, but that "political considerations" intervened to bring it to naught. It is cited simply by way of historical reminder, and as suggestive of what may yet be effectively accomplished to the full extent of popular repudiation.

The Congress of Ems, in 1786, was a gathering of the representatives of a number of German Archbishops and other clergy, "for the purpose of protesting against papal interference in the exercise of episcopal powers and fixing the future relations between these archbishops and the Roman pontiff. . . . On 25 August, 1786, these archiepiscopal representatives signed the notorious 'Punctation of Ems,' consisting of twenty-three articles, which aimed at making the German archbishops practically independent of Rome. *Assuming that Christ gave unlimited power of binding and loosing to the Apostles and their successors*, the bishops, the 'Punctation' maintains that all prerogatives and reservations which were not actually connected with the primacy during the first three centuries *owe their origin to the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals, universally acknowledged as false*, and, hence, that the bishops must look upon all interference of the Roman Curia with the exercise of their episcopal functions in their own dioceses as encroachments on their rights. . . . It may easily be seen that the articles of the 'Punctation' lower the papal primacy to a merely honorary one and advocate an independence of the archbishops in regard to the pope which is entirely incompatible with *the Unity and Catholicity of the Church of Christ*,"—such are the unctuous objections made by Christ's Church. However, the Punctations were "ratified by the Archbishops, and sent to Emperor Joseph II for his support. The Emperor was pleased with the articles, and would have pledged his unqualified support *if* his councillors had not *for political reasons* advised him otherwise." (*CE.* v, 409–10.) Rejecting the "assumption," now known to be false and forged, that Christ had anything at all to do with Peter and the Rock-and-Keys forgery, all may now feel free to discard these primitive "Scripture" frauds just as all the others of the Church which have been exposed as false and abandoned.

FORGED SAINTS, MARTYRS AND MIRACLES

"Throughout Church History there are miracles so well authenticated that their truth cannot be denied." (*CE.* x, 345.)

" . . . after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thess. ii, 9.)

Look we for a moment on this picture and on that, the counterfeit presentment, to slightly adapt *Hamlet*, of two modern Miracles, published to the world in the Metropolitan press,—a sort of study in what may be called Comparative Credulity. The first, although they "read it in the paper," no Christian or no Infidel will hesitate to laugh at or commiserate as a ridiculous superstition, taken advantage of by greedy priests to exploit their credulous dupes. Only benighted heathen Buddhists religiously believe the following:

"Peasant says Buddha Arose and Cured Him.
"Chinese Tale of a 'Miracle' by Stone Image Causes Religious
"Revival at Peking

"Peking, Sept. 7. A tremendous revival of religious superstition is being experienced by the Buddhists of Peking and vicinity, because an aged peasant vows that he was cured (last week) of a long-standing ailment when one of the stone images of the sitting Buddha at Palichwang Pagoda rose to its feet, stepped forward, and then raised its arm in sign of benediction.

"The old peasant, named Chang Chi-kuang, is a farmer, living near Palichwang Pagoda [a short distance from the Peking gate of the Great Wall]. Chang Chi-kuang, who, his neighbors say, has long suffered from lung trouble [passing by with a load of garden-truck which he was carrying afoot into the city], became exhausted, and stopped for rest and for refuge from the heat in the shade of an old tree near the Pagoda, which is thirteen stories high and was built 500 years ago, and in the days of the Ming emperors.

"Chang Chi-kuang, as he lay resting in the shade, found his gaze focused on the figure of the sitting Buddha, in the third story of the Pagoda. . . . The figure rose, Chang says, took two steps, and raised its arms with a gesture of blessing. At this point, according to Chang, he nearly swooned. He then fell to his knees in devout worship, and when he raised his head after a long prayer the Buddha had gone back to the place and position of the last few hundred years.

"The story of this miracle has spread rapidly. Every day now thousands

of pilgrims go to Palichwang from Peking and from the villages and farms in this part of the province.

"Both sides of the road from the Peking gate to the Pagoda are now lined with booths where incense *is sold,* and hundreds of Lama priests, with their begging bowls, now *reap a rich gathering from the pious pilgrims.* . . . And old Chang swears that he is now in better health than he has enjoyed since he was a boy." (Special Correspondence of the *New York Times,* October 14, 1928.)

The foregoing religious news item is found archived in the "Morgue" of the Great "Religious" Daily under the discrediting caption "Superstitions"; it will be noticed that the word "Miracle" in the headline is printed in quotes. No such skeptical note is to be found in its next—Christian—report.

Hundreds of millions of pious priest-ridden Christians do believe the following, testified under oath in a military court,—other hundreds of millions will regard it as they do the Buddhist tale above related,—and the Christian one below:

"Soldier's Story of a Miracle Saves Him at Court-Martial.

"Croatian newspapers tell how a miracle figured as a determining factor in a court-martial trial. During the Austrian invasion of Upper Italy a Croatian soldier was suspected of having stolen a pearl necklace from a statue of the Holy Virgin in a pilgrims' church and was brought to trial. He admitted having taken the necklace, but insisted that it was a gift to him.

"He said that he had gone into the church to pray, and had lamented before the statue of the Virgin the sad lot of his family, whom he had been compelled to leave destitute. Thereupon, he said, the Holy Virgin bowed her head, and took the pearls from her neck and handed them to him.

"The Court could not venture to reject this story offhand, as there was general belief in the miracle-working power of the statue. So it referred the matter to two Bishops, asking them whether such a miracle was within the domain of possibility.

"The Bishops were perplexed. If they answered 'Yes,' they might be protecting a rascal. But if they said 'No,' they would destroy the repute of that church for miraculous power and phenomena. Finally they answered that such a miracle was within the range of possibility; and in consequence the soldier was acquitted.

"But the Colonel of the regiment to which the soldier belonged was either skeptical or of a most prudent turn of mind, for after the verdict of the court had been announced he issued his order: 'In future no soldier

under my command is permitted, under heavy penalty, to accept a gift from anybody.' " (*New York Times,* Oct. 10, 1926.)

It is not reported whether this episcopal pair of men of God were unfrocked for perjury and the perversion of justice, or even gently chided by His Holiness.

The "lying wonders" of saints, martyrs and miracles are so intimately related, and so inextricably interwoven the one form of pious fraud with the others, that they must needs be bunched together in this summary treatment of but few out of countless thousands, millions perhaps, of them recorded for faith and edification in the innumerable "Acts" and "Lives" and wonderworks of the Holy Church of God. Those which are here mentioned are picked at random from a turning of the pages of the fifteen ponderous tomes of *CE.*, where they may be verified under the respective names of the Saints. With scarcely an exception they are soberly recounted as actual verities of the past and living realities of the present.

The degraded state of mind of the Faithful, and the moral depravity of the Church which for nearly two millennia, and yet into the twentieth century, peddles these childish fables as articles of Christian faith, may be known by the mere fact of the existence in limitless numbers of these precious myths. Founded by Jean Bolland, of Belgium, in the early years of the 1600's, an important Church Society, known as the Bollandists, yet exists and industriously carries on its labors. "This monumental work, the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, has become the foundation of all investigation in hagiography and legend." (*CE.* ix, 129.) For some three centuries its task has been and yet is, to edit and publish in official *Acta Sanctorum* the Lives and "Acts"—authenticated records—of every Saint in the Holy Roman Calendar. Arranged in order of dates of their "feast days," so numerous is this heavenly mill-made host that up to the month of October over 25,000 officially authenticated Saints are recorded; the Saint-library of the Society has over 150,000 saintly volumes. As it costs about $50,000 to turn out one Saint by canonization, and "not less than $20,000" for beatification or the bestowal of the title of Blessed (*CE.* ii, 369),—the Church revenue from this single source is seen to have been considerable.

THE CHURCH FORGERY MILL

Holy Church is very careful and conscientious in its processes of certifying Saints; at least two allegedly genuine and fully authenticated miracles must be *proven* to have been performed by the candidate alive or worked by his relics after death, before final payment is required and the name certified as a Saint to the Calendar. A fairly modern instance showing this clerical scrupulosity may be cited, that of the Venerable Mary de Sales, who died in 1875:—"Wishing to save the world over again, Jesus Our Lord had to use means till then unknown," that is, "The Way" invented by Mary; but no miracles were satisfactorily proved to justify making her a Saint; however, her sanctity was proved, and she was decreed Venerable; some miracles must later have been proved up in her behalf, or the requisite $20,000 paid,—for in 1897 her Beatification was decreed. (*CE.* ix, 754.)

However, even Infallibility may be fooled sometimes, even if not all the time. The most notorious instance is that of the holy Saint Josaphat, under which name and due to an odd slip of inerrant inspiration, the great Lord Buddha, "The Light of Asia," was duly certified a Saint in the Roman Martyrology (27 Nov.; *CE.* iii, 297). More modernly, in 1802, an old grave was found containing a cadaver and a bottle "supposed to contain the blood of a martyr"; the relics were enshrined in an altar, and the erstwhile owner of the remains was duly and solemnly canonized as Saint Philomena; but this was "by mistake"; and thus were fooled two infallible Holinesses, Gregory XVI and Leo III. (*CE.* xii, 25.)

"SPECULA STULTORUM"

Before thumbing the wonder-filled pages of *CE.* to pick out from thousands, sundry examples of the inspired and truthful histories of Saints and Martyrs, recorded for the moral edification and mental stultification of the Faithful of the Twentieth Century,—when only the miracles of Science in benefit of humanity are recognized by many as real,—we may note the comment of that Exponent of "Catholic Truth" conscientiously questioning a case or two of the certified Saint-records. With respect to one of the notable female Saints, St. Catherine of Alexandria, it is candidly explained: "Unfortunately these Acts have been transformed and distorted by fantastic and diffuse descriptions which are entirely due to the imagination of the

narrators—[a notable one of whom was the great Bossuet of France],—who cared less to state authentic *facts* than to charm their readers by recitals of the marvellous." (*CE.* iii, 445.) Speaking of another case, St. Emmeram: "The improbability of the tale, the fantastic details of the Saint's martyrdom, and the fantastic account of the prodigies attending his death, show that the writer, *infected by the pious mania of his time*, simply added to the facts *imaginary details* supposed to redound to the glory of the martyr." (v, 406.) How often have we heard from this same exponent of "Catholic Truth" this same exculpation of priestly pious mendacity in wondermongering!

Questioning a few such instances, implicitly carries with it the moral assurance that all the others, related as unquestioned fact, are free from such taint of fraud,—are, indeed, among those "miracles so well authenticated that their truth cannot be denied." Indeed, the reality and authenticity of very many, for example, the bubbling blood of the sixteen-hundred-year-old martyred St. Januarius, and its frequent efficacy in stopping eruptions of the Volcano Mt. Vesuvius, are explicitly affirmed by the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, which is now to be quoted. It may be suspected, however, that even these certified Saint-tales, like so many others, are fakes and "belong to the common foundation of all legends of saints" (*CE.* i, 40), the fraud of which is confessed.

Very portentous is this St. Januarius, "martyred" about 305: "His holy blood is kept unto this day in a phial of glass, which being set near his head, bubbles up as though it were fresh," in the church of St. Januarius at Naples; a long article is replete with plenary proofs of this and other miracles of the Saint. He was thrown into a fiery furnace, but the flames would not touch him and his companions; his executioner was struck blind, but the Saint cured him. His holy remains were brought to Naples, and are famous on account of many miracles, as recorded in the official papal "present Roman Martyrology," a longer account being given in the Breviary, as quoted in these words of assurance: "Among these miracles is remarkable the *stopping of eruptions of Mount Vesuvius*, whereby both that neighborhood and places afar off have been like to be destroyed. It is *also well known and is the plain fact*, seen even unto this day, that when the blood of St. Januarius, kept dried up in a small glass phial, is put in sight of the head of the same martyr, it is wont to melt and bubble up

in a very strange way, as though it had but freshly been shed. . . . For more than four hundred years this liquefaction has taken place at frequent intervals"; elaborate tests, the last reported in 1902 and 1904, have been unable to account for the phenomenon except as due to miracle. "It has had much to do with many conversations to Catholicism. Unfortunately, however, allegations have often been made as to the favourable verdict expressed by scientific men of note, which are not always verifiable. The supposed testimony of the great chemist, Sir Humphrey Davy, who is declared to have expressed his belief in the genuineness of the miracle, is a case in point." (*CE.* viii, 295–7.)

This Holy Bottle of blood might well be borrowed to stop the present eruption of Mt. Ætna in Sicily, which (as this is written), is destroying several populous towns and "the most intensively cultivated land in Sicily," by a torrent of lava a mile in width, against which the local Patron seems impotent: "The lava struck Mascali, a town of 10,000 inhabitants last night, just after the townsfolk had finished celebrating the feast of their patron, St. Leonardo, whose statue was carried on the shoulders of four old men." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune*, Nov. 8, 1928.) But such pious thaumaturgies do not seem to be overly potent this year. In this unguarded *a priori* surmise I find myself mistaken, and apologize to the gentle reader and to Holy Church. There is no need to borrow the Vesuvius-stopping Blood of St. Januarius; Sicily has its own local Ætna-stopper, the Holy Veil of St. Agatha, "which, according to tradition, has arrested the flow of lava toward Catania in the past." This sacred and potent relic, a bit tardily, after several large towns have been wiped out, has now "been exposed in the cathedral by order of the Archbishop Cardinal Nava, who also issued an appeal for prayers by all in the diocese. He exhorted the population to remain calm and *maintain their faith.* On previous occasions prayers to St. Agatha were said when an eruption occurred, and the lava stopped short before Nicolosi and Linguaglossa, twenty-five miles north of Catania." (*N. Y. Sun*, Nov. 13, 1928.) This tardy exposition of the Relics and order for prayers,—after scientific examinations and airplane explorations had shown that the fiery forces were about spent and "the lava showing signs of solidification and emissions from the smoking mountain lessening,"—is somewhat posthumous, or humorous; the devastation was already wrought. If

St. Agatha's anti-volcano Veil had been gotten out of storage and waved or hung up on the first signs of eruption, some of this history, one way or another, would have been different. But if the Saint can stop volcanoes after the evil deed is done,— Well, one miracle of prevention is better than a larger number of miracles of cure,—which are ineffective to repair the havoc in such cases. Like miracles of liquefaction of Holy Blood yet occur abundantly, as in the noted cases of "Saints John the Baptist, Stephen, Pantaleone, Patricia, Nicholas, Aloysius," *et id omne genus;* so with the bottled "Milk of our Lady" and the canned "fat of St. Thomas Aquinas," on their respective Saint-days! (*CE.* viii, 297.)

The sacred Council of Trent, in 1546, decreed: "That the saints who reign with Christ offer to God their prayers for men; that it is good and useful to invoke them by supplication and to have recourse to their aid and assistance in order to obtain from God His benefits through His Son and Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who alone is our Saviour and Redeemer." (Session xxv.) But the sacred Council, in its preoccupation of combating the nascent outraged revolt and protest of Protestantism, which was filching its most plausible counterfeits for circulation in a hostile camp,—seems to have overlooked this scrap of forged Scripture: "For there is one God, and *one* Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus." (I Tim. ii, 5.) The effect, however, of this multiplication of saintly mediators is picturesque; it is finely exemplified in the great painting "The Intercession of the Saints," in the Royal Gallery at Naples: In the background is the plague-stricken city; in the foreground the people are praying to the city authorities to avert the plague; the city authorities are praying to the Carthusian monks; the monks are praying to the Blessed Virgin; the Virgin prays to Christ; and Christ prays to his Father Almighty. The Holy Ghost, who "itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," is quite left out of the picture. Just how good and useful it is to invoke the Saints directly, saving Doctor's bills and other inconveniences, will be noticed in the catalogue of Saints below inscribed.

It was in the fifth century, says Dr. McCabe, that "Rome began on a large scale the forgery of lives of martyrs. Relics of martyrs were now being 'discovered' in great numbers to meet the pious demand of

ignorant Christendom, and legends were fabricated by the thousands to authenticate the spurious bits of bone." (*LBB.* 1130, p. 40.) "Such," says *CE.*, "are the 'Martyrium S. Polycarpi,' admitting, though it does, much that may be due to the pious fancy of the eye-witness"; also "the 'Acta SS. Perpetuæ et Felicitas.' "

The Saint-mill of Holy Church began operations very early, or reached for grist far back into antiquity for the beginnings of its Calendar of Saints. The first Saint who greets us among the countless hordes of canonized Holy Ones is no less a primitive personage that St. Abel, the younger son and second heir of our mythical Father Adam, of Eden, who was canonized by Jesus Christ himself, we are told, "as the first of a long line of prophets martyred for justice's sake," as is the clerical interpretation of Matt. xxiii, 34–35, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias,"—a bloody invocation in later centuries peculiarly appropriate to the Church of Jesus Christ. This is a genuine surprise, for no miracles wrought by St. Abel are recorded, and no generous canonization fees seem to have been paid for his account into the Treasury of the Lord in Rome.

OLD PAGAN STUFF

Many of the Pagan gods were converted into Christian Saints, and seem to have brought over with them the special curative or prophylactic attributes for which they were invoked as specifics. Indeed, the whole system was purely Pagan: "Cures, apparitions, prophecies, visions, transfigurations, stigmata, pleasant odour, incorruption,—all these phenomena were also known to antiquity. Ancient Greece exhibits stone monuments and inscriptions which bear witness to cures and apparitions in ancient mythology. History tells of Aristeas of Proconnessus, Hermotimus of Claxomenæ, Epimenides of Crete, that they were *ascetics and thereby became ecstatic*, even to the degree of the soul leaving the body, remaining far removed from it, and being able to appear in other places." (*CE.* ix, 129.) The pious plan of temporal salvation in the Ages of Faith is thus historically vouched: "The whole social life of the Catholic world before the Reformation was animated with the idea of protection from the citizens of heaven.

There were patrons or protectors in various forms of illness, as for instance: St. Agatha, diseases of the breast; Apollonia, toothache; Blaise, sore throat; Clare and Lucy, eyes; Benedict, against poison; Hubert, against bites of dogs." (*CE.* xi, 566.) "Catania honours St. Agatha as her patron saint, and throughout the region around Mt. Ætna she is invoked against the eruptions of the volcano, as elsewhere against fire and lightning." (i, 204.)

To the infamous sanctified fable of St. Hugh are imputed sundry unholy accusations and persecutions against the Jews,—(here only repeated because they are falsely affirmed in the inspired Bull of Canonization. A Christian child was lyingly alleged to have been crucified by the Jews; the earth refused to receive its body, and it was thrown into a well, where it was found with the marks of crucifixion upon it; nineteen Jews were infamously put to death for the fabulous crime, and ninety others were condemned to death but released, for the sake of greed, upon payment of large fines; "Copin, the leader, stated that it was a Jewish custom to crucify a boy once a year"! (*CE.* vii, 515); similar infamies of falsehood are related in connection with St. William of Norwich. (*CE.* xv, 635.)

Here is a monumental miracle with every assurance of verity. "St. Winefride was a maiden of great personal charm and endowed with rare gifts of intellect. The fame of her beauty and accomplishments reached the ears of Caradoc, son of the neighboring Prince Alen." She refused all his advances; frightened by his threats she fled towards the church where her uncle St. Beuno was celebrating Mass. "Maddened by a disappointed passion, Caradoc pursued her and, overtaking her on the slope above the site of the present well, he drew his sword and at one blow severed her head from the body. The head rolled down the incline and, where it rested, there gushed forth a spring." St. Beuno, hearing of the tragedy, left the altar, and accompanied by the parents came to the spot where the head lay beside the spring. "Taking up the maiden's head he carried it to where the body lay, covered both with his cloak, and then re-entered the church to finish the Holy Sacrifice. When Mass was ended he knelt beside the Saint's body, offered up a fervent prayer to God, and ordered the cloak which covered it to be removed. Thereupon Winefride, as if awakening from a deep slumber, rose up with no sign of the severing of the head except

a thin white circle round her neck. Seeing the murderer leaning on his sword with an insolent and defiant air, St. Beuno invoked the chastisement of heaven, and Caradoc fell dead on the spot, the popular belief being that the earth opened and swallowed him. Miraculously restored to life, Winefride seems to have lived in almost perpetual ecstacy and to have had familiar converse with God." The place where this signal miracle occurred was at the time called "Dry Hollow," but with its miraculous spring its name was changed to Holywell, and it stands there in Wales to this day, a bubblingly vocal witness to the verity of this holy yarn. Born in 600, beheaded and reheaded at sweet sixteen, she died Nov. 3, 660; "her death was foreshown to her in a vision by Christ Himself." (*CE.* xv, 656–657.) "For more than a thousand years this Miraculous Well has attracted numerous pilgrims; documents preserved in the British Museum give us its history, with the earliest record of the miraculous cures effected by its waters. These ancient cures included cases of dropsy, paralysis, gout, melancholia, sciatica, cancer, alienation of mind, blood spitting, etc. etc., also deliverance from evil spirits." (*CE.* repeats the history of St. Winefride, or Gwenfrewi, in vii, 438.)

St. Wolfgang, by a unique miracle, "forced the devil to help him build a church."—*Et id omne genus—ad nauseam.* Such is a handful of the holy chaff of faith, purveyed by Holy Church to all Believers to this day. Scores of like saint-lies are here omitted to save space.

These gross and degrading impostures by forged miracles not only went unrebuked and unchecked by the Vicars of God; many of the vice-Gods were among the most prolific miracle-mongers of the ages of Faith. One of the most notorious wonder-workers and wonder-forgers of Holy Church was no less a personage than His Holiness Pope St. Gregory the Great (590–604). He has the doubtful distinction of being the author of four celebrated volumes of *Dialogi*, which are a veritable thesaurus of holy wonders. From this treasury of nature-fakery we have seen the old Pagan example, affirmed as Christian fact by Gregory, as quoted by *CE.*, of the man carried off by mistake by the Angel of Death, but restored to life when the oversight was discovered. He also relates a great flood of the Tiber which threatened to destroy Rome, until a copy of His Holiness's "Dialogi" was

thrown into the swollen waters, which immediately subsided, and the Holy City was thus saved. His Holiness solemnly records the case of an awful bellyache suffered by a holy nun, which he avers was caused by her having swallowed a devil along with a piece of lettuce which she was eating without having taken the due precaution of making the sign of the cross over it to scare away any lurking imps of Satan; and this devil, when commanded by a holy monk to come out of the nun, derisively replied: "How am I to blame? I was sitting on the lettuce, and this woman, not having made the sign of the cross, ate me along with it!" (*Dial.* lib. i, c. 4.) When elected Pope in 590 the city of Rome was afflicted by a dreadful pestilence; the angels of the angry God of all mercies were relentlessly flinging fiery darts among the devout Christian populace. To conjure away the pestilence —due perhaps primarily to the filth of the Holy City and its inhabitants—His Holiness headed a monkish parade through the stricken city, when of a sudden he saw the Archangel Michael hovering over the great Pagan mausoleum of Hadrian, just in the act of sheathing his flaming sword, while three angels with him chanted the original verses of the *Regina Cœli;* the great Pope made the Sign of the Cross and broke into Hallelujahs—(that is, "Praise to Yahveh," the old Hebrew war-god). In commemoration of the wondrous event, the pious Pope built a Christian chapel, dedicated to St. Michael, atop the Pagan monument, and over it erected the colossal statue of the Archangel in the sword-sheathing act, which stands there in Rome to this day—the Castel Sant' Angelo, in enduring proof of the miracle and of the veracity of papal narratives. (*CE.* vi, 782.) The authorship of this monkish Hymn to the Queen of Heaven being unknown, pious invention supplied its true history: "that St. Gregory the Great heard the first three lines chanted by angels on a certain Easter morning in Rome while he walked barefoot in a great religious procession, and that the Saint thereupon added the fourth line." (*CE.* xii, 719.) Such is ecclesiastical "history."

The literary attainments of His Holiness Gregory were tempered, if not corrupted, by his holy zeal, for "in his commentary on Job, Gregory I warns the reader that he need not be surprised to find mistakes of Latin Grammar, since in dealing with so holy a work as the Bible a writer should not stop to make sure whether his cases and

tenses are right." (Robinson, *The Ordeal of Civilization*, p. 62.) However, his zeal for more material things was not thus hampered: "Pope Gregory I contrived to make his real belief in the approaching end of the world yield the papacy about 1800 square miles of land and a revenue of about $2,000,000. He used bribes, threats and all kinds of stratagems to attain his ends." (McCabe, *LLB.* 1130, p. 40.)

His Holiness Gregory I was himself one of the greatest thaumaturgists of the Ages of Faith: "the miracles attributed to Gregory are very many." (*CE.* vi, 786.) When Mohammed was forging his inspired Book of Koran, the illuminating spirit, in the guise of a dove, would perch on his shoulder and whisper the divine revelations into his ear,—a miracle which none but quite devout Mohammedans believe. But Peter the Deacon, in his *Vita* of His wonder-working Holiness, records that when St. Gregory was dictating his *Homilies on Ezekiel:* "A veil was drawn between his secretary and himself. As, however, the pope remained silent for long periods at a time, the servant made a hole in the curtain and, looking through, beheld a dove seated on Gregory's head with his beak between his lips. When the dove withdrew its beak the holy pontiff spoke and the secretary took down his words; but when he became silent the secretary again applied his eye to the hole and saw that the dove had replaced its beak between his lips." (*CE.* vi, 786.) No good Christian can doubt, after this proof, that their Holinesses are constantly and directly inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost, as Holy Church assures. Wonderful as this bit of Gregory's history is, to recommend him to lasting remembrance, "his great claim to remembrance lies in the fact that he is the real father of the medieval papacy." (*Ibid.*) These qualities of the Holy Father which we have noticed may to an extent explain some of the eccentricities of the Medieval Papacy.

FORGED AND FAKED RELICS

"Making every allowance for the errors of the most extreme fallibility, the history of Catholicism would on this hypothesis represent an amount of imposture probably unequalled in the annals of the human race."

Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, i, 164.

As loathsome an example as is to be found in the annals of Chris-

tian apologetics for fraud and imposture is this from *CE.*, following a long and revolting exposition of the Christian frauds with respect to holy Relics of the Church:

"Still, it would be presumptuous in such cases to blame the action of the ecclesiastical authority in permitting the continuance of a cult which extends back into remote antiquity. [*i. e.* into Paganism.] . . .

"Supposing the relic to be spurious, NO DISHONOR IS DONE TO GOD by the continuance of an error handed down in perfect good faith for many centuries"! (*CE.* xii, 337.)

It may well be that the holy God of the Christians is immune to dishonor by worship through lying Christian frauds; but one may question the dishonor to the human mind wrought by the impostures of God's Vicars and his Church, cozening men into holy faith in lies; to say nothing of the shaming dishonor of Church and priest, who with utter want of good faith and common honesty created and fostered all these degrading Churchly cheats.

Before viewing some of these priestly impostures, never once rebuked or prevented by pope or priest, but, rather, industriously stimulated by them for purposes of perpetuating ignorance and superstition, and of feeding their own insatiate avarice, *CE.* will be invoked to give a graphic, though clerically casuistic and apologetic review of the debauchery of morals and mind which made possible these scandalous unholy practices of Holy Church.

"Naturally it was impossible for popular enthusiasm to be roused to so high a pitch in a matter which easily lent itself to error, fraud, and greed for gain, without at least the occasional occurrence of many grave abuses. . . . In the Theodosian Code the sale of relics is forbidden (vii, ix, 17), but numerous stories, of which it would be easy to collect a long series, beginning with the writings of Pope St. Gregory the Great and St. Gregory of Tours, prove to us that many unprincipled persons found a means of enriching themselves by a sort of trade in these objects of devotion, *the majority of which no doubt were fraudulent.* At the beginning of the ninth century the exportation of the bodies of martyrs from Rome had assumed the proportions of a regular commerce, and a certain deacon, Deusdona, acquired an unenviable notoriety in these transactions. What was in the long run

hardly less disastrous than fraud or avarice, was the keen rivalry between religious centers, and the *eager credulity fostered* by the desire to be known as the possessor of some unusually startling relic. In such an atmosphere of lawlessness doubtful relics came to abound. There was always disposition to regard any human remains accidentally discovered near a church or in the catacombs as the body of a martyr . . . the custom of making facsimiles and imitations, a custom which persists to our own day in the replicas of the Vatican statue of St. Peter—[itself a fraud]—or of the Grotto of Lourdes—all these are causes adequate to account for *the multitude of unquestionably spurious relics* with which the treasuries of great medieval churches were crowded. . . . Join to this the large license given to the occasional unscrupulous rogue IN AN AGE NOT ONLY UTTERLY UNCRITICAL but often curiously morbid in its realism, and it becomes easy to understand the multiplicity and extravagance of the entries in the relics inventories of Rome and other countries.

"Such tests [to secure the Faithful against deception] were applied as the historical and antiquarian science of that day were capable of devising. Very often, however, this *test* took the form of *an appeal to some miraculous sanction*, as in the well known story repeated by St. Ambrose, according to which, when doubt arose which of the three crosses discovered by St. Helena was that of Christ, the healing of a sick man by one of them dispelled all further hesitation. Nevertheless it remains true that many of the more important ancient relics *duly exhibited* for veneration in the great sanctuaries of Christendom or even at Rome itself must now be pronounced to be either certainly spurious or open to grave suspicion. To take one example of the latter class, the boards of the crib (Præsæpe)—a name which for more than a thousand years has been associated, as now, with the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore—can only be considered to be of doubtful authenticity. . . . Strangely enough, an inscription in Greek uncials of the eighth century is found on one of the boards, the inscription having nothing to do with the Crib but being apparently concerned with some commercial transaction. It is hard to explain its presence on the supposition that the relic is authentic. Similar difficulties might be urged against the supposed 'Column of the Flagellation' venerated at Rome in the church of Santa Prassede,

and against many other famous relics. . . . Neither has the church ever pronounced that any particular relic, not even that commonly venerated as the wood of the Cross, is authentic; but she *approves* of honour being paid to those relics which with reasonable probability are believed to be genuine, and which are invested with due ecclesiastical sanctions." (*CE.* xii, 737.) Such sophistry!

The pettifogging sophistry of the foregoing argumentation, as of that which follows from the same clerical source, needs no comment. The Church of God, headed by his own Vicar General on earth, divinely guided against all error in matters of faith and morals, and which can detect the faintest taint of heresy of belief further than the most gifted bird of rapine can scent a carcass, can make no apology for permitting these degrading superstitions, which it not only tolerates but actively propagates and encourages, for the rich revenues they bring in. What a catalogue of its most sacred mummeries is branded with the infamy of fraudulent in the following:

"The worship of *imaginary* saints or relics, devotion based upon *false* revelations, apparitions, *supposed* miracles, or *false notions* generally, is usually *excusable in the Worshipper on the ground of ignorance* and good faith; but there is no excuse for those who use similar means to exploit popular credulity for their own pecuniary profit. The originators of such falsehoods are liars, deceivers, and not rarely thieves; but a milder judgment should be pronounced on those who, after discovering the imposture tolerate the improper cultus [!] . . . The Catholic devotions which are connected with holy places, holy shrines, holy wells, famous relics, etc., are commonly *treated as superstitions* by non-Catholics. . . . It must be admitted that these *hallowed* spots and things have occasioned many legends; that popular credulity was in some cases the principal cause of their celebrity; that here or there *instances of fraud can be adduced;* yet, for all that, the principles which guide the worshipper, and his good intentions, are not impaired by an undercurrent of error as to facts. [!] Moreover . . . *the Church is tolerant of 'pious beliefs' which have helped to further Christianity* [!] Thus, alleged saints and relics are suppressed as soon as discovered, but belief in the *private revelations* to which the feast of *Corpus Christi, The Rosary, the Sacred Heart,* and many other devotions owe their origin is neither com-

manded nor prohibited; here each man is his own judge. . . . *The apparent success which so often attends a superstition can mostly be accounted for by natural causes.* . . . When the object is to ascertain, or to effect in a general way, one of two possible events, the law of probabilities gives an equal chance to success and failure, and success does more to support than failure would do to destroy superstition." (*CE.* xiv, 340, 341.) All these holy cults are thus confessed frauds and superstitions fostered by ecclesiastic greed.

Let us remember that no True Church in Christendom can be built and consecrated without a box of dead man's bones or other fetid human scraps and relics deposited under the holy altar of God. The decree of the second council of Nice, A. D. 787, reaffirmed by the Council of Trent in 1546, forbade the consecration of any Church without a supply of relics. (*CE.* xii, 737.) Thus the ancient superstition is sanctioned and its observance made mandatory; an unceasing demand is created, and the market supply is more than equal to the pious demand. Hence the great and valuable, and fraudulent, traffic above confessed and clerically palliated.

THE "INVENTION OF THE CROSS," ET AL

"The Legend as to the discovering of the Cross of Christ" (*CE.* vii, 203). The Holy City, Jerusalem, was twice destroyed by the Romans, in 70 A. D. by Titus, and again as the result of the rebellion of Bar-Cochba, 132–135 A. D. The work was peculiarly thorough; not one stone was left upon another; the site was plowed over as a mark of infamy, and the ground is said to have been sown with salt so that nothing might ever grow there again: though pious myths soon flourished exuberantly. Later a pagan city was established on the site, named Ælia Capitolina, and a great Temple of Venus was erected on a suitable spot. Over two centuries later, about 326 A. D., a great and venerated Catholic lady Saint made a pious pilgrimage to the Holy City, namely, St. Helena, sainted mother of the new "Christian" Emperor Constantine. This is the St. Helena who got her start as a Pagan barmaid in a wild country village; she fell into the graces of the Roman Imperator Constantius as he marched through the country, became his mistress by "*concubinatus*," and bore unto

him and the Church him who was afterwards the godly Emperor Constantine. (*CE.* iv, 300.) Upon the pilgrimage of the pious Dowager-mother to Jerusalem, great pomp and ceremony attended her visit, under the auspices of the good Bishop Macarius. By order of the Bishop and in honor of the Christian Saint, the Temple of Venus was torn down; it was found to have been built over an empty rock grave—therefore identically the authentic sepulchre of Jesus Christ. Is it true, that this destroyed Temple of Venus and the inclosed Holy Sepulchre were inside the walls of the City, while the Gospels inspiredly aver that the grave was outside the walls: a trifling discrepancy for Faith.

Rummaging the ruins, a vaulted underground room or cellar was found: its wonderful contents make to pale into triviality the lately discovered tomb-treasures of Tut-ankh-Amen. There propped against the cellar-wall was the whole apparatus of the Cruci-fiction: the three identical Crosses whereon had hung the Christ and the two thieves; the very Nails wherewith they had been fastened; the autograph trilingual Inscription set by Pilate over the head of the Christ; the precise Spear which had pierced his side; the cruel Crown of Thorns which tore his brow; the holy Seamless Coat which he had worn and for which the Roman soldiers gambled in the hour of death (it's curious that the winner should have left it behind); the sacred Shroud in which the dead God was buried. The Pilatic Inscription was not *in situ;* it had evidently been knocked off and lay apart, a "separate piece of wood, on which were inscribed in white letters in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the following words: 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,'" as recorded by Sozomen, the Church historian. (*Eccles. Hist.* ii, 1; *N&PNF.* II, p. 258.)

Due to its unfortunate separation from its original position, it was for the moment impossible to distinguish the True Cross of Christ from those of the thieves. A miracle was vouchsafed, however, to identify the real Cross of the Christ: the True Cross bowed itself down before the Saintly Empress; or, a sick woman—or a sick man—was cured upon touching the True Cross after having tried the other two in vain—according to which priestly version is the more truthful. Sozomen (*supra*) says that it was "a certain lady of rank in Jerusalem who was inflicted with a most grievous and incurable disease,"

whose miraculous curing attested the True Cross; "a dead person was also restored to life" by its thaumaturgic touch:—"all as predicted by the prophets and by the Sibyl." Some tinge of dubiety may be thrown upon the report of Bishop Macarius, who made the wondrous discoveries, first recorded by the Church historians Socrates, about 439 A. D. (*Eccles. Hist.* I, xvii), and Sozomen, who wrote a little later (*Eccles. Hist.* II, i), by the fact that the earliest Church Historian, the very informative and fabling Bishop Eusebius (d. 340), in his *Life of Constantine* (III, iii, and III, xxviii), gives a very circumstantial account of the visit of the ex-Empress St. Helena to Jerusalem, and of the erection of a Christian Church over the Holy Sepulchre, but he is silent as the grave about the discovery of any Cross of Christ or any of the other holy marvels. The notable event is known, in Church parlance, as "The Invention of the Cross"—which exactly it was.

The subsequent "history" of the Cross of Christ is a tangle of typically clerical contradictions and impossibilities. "Very soon after the discovery of the True Cross, its wood was cut up into small relics and scattered throughout Christendom." (*CE.* iv, 524.)

"We learn from St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*before 350*) that the wood of the Cross, discovered about 318, [it was in 326] *was already distributed throughout the world.*" (*CE.* xii, 736.) But these assurances of St. Cyril and of *CE.* seem out of harmony with the accredited history of the capture and asportation of the reputed integral True Cross by Chosroes (Khosru) II, King of Persia, who took Jerusalem in 614, massacring 90,000 good Christians, captured the Cross of Christ among his booty, and carried it off *whole* in triumph to Persia! (*CE.* iii, 105),—with results very disastrous to the Faith: "The shock which religious men received through this dreadful event can hardly now be realized. The imposture of Constantine bore bitter fruit; the sacred wood which had filled the world with its miracles was detected to be a helpless counterfeit, borne off in triumph by deriding blasphemers. All confidence in the apostolic powers of the Asiatic bishops was lost; not one of them could work a wonder for his own salvation in the dire extremity." (Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, i, 328; Gibbon, p. 451.) The truly miraculous nature of this True Cross is thus described by Draper: "The wood of the Cross displayed a property of growth, and hence furnished an abundant supply for the de-

mands of pilgrims and an unfailing source of pecuniary profit to its possessors. In the course of subsequent years there was accumulated in the various churches of Europe, from this particular relic, a sufficiency to have constructed many hundred crosses." (*Op. cit.* i, 309.) On a great porphyry column before the Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, stood a statue of the Pagan god Apollo; the face was altered into the features of the Emperor Constantine, and the Nails of the True Cross, set around like rays, were used to garnish the crown upon his head. Another of these holy Nails has for centuries adorned and consecreated the crown of the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. The horses of a regiment of cavalry could probably be shod with the copious supply of these Holy Nails now venerated as sacred relics.

"It is remarkable," says *CE.*, "that St. Jerome, who expatiates upon the Cross, the Title, and the Nails, discovered by St. Helena, says nothing either of the Lance or of the Crown of Thorns, and the silence of Andreas of Crete in the eighth century is still more surprising." But in due time this oversight was piously repaired. Bishop Gregory of Tours, among other faithful Church chroniclers, produces the Crown of Thorns, and, as an eyewitness to it, "avers that the thorns in the Crown still looked green, a freshness which was miraculously renewed every day"; which episcopal assurance, skeptically remarks *CE.*, "does not much strengthen the historical testimony for the authenticity of the relic." But, "in any case, Justinian, who died in 565, is stated to have given a thorn to St. Germanus, which was long preserved at Saint-Germain-des-Près, while the Empress Irene sent Charlemagne several thorns which were deposited by him at Aachen. . . . In 1238 Baldwin II, the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, anxious to obtain support for his tottering empire, offered the Crown of Thorns to St. Louis, King of France. It was then actually [in pawn] in the hands of the Venetians as *security for a heavy loan*, but it was redeemed and conveyed to Paris, where St. Louis built the Sainte Chapelle for its reception." The further history of the holy spurious relic is traced in detail; as late as 1896 "a magnificent new reliquary of rock crystal was made for it"; but by that time the holy relic, like a fighting-cock with his tail-feathers clawed out, was a sorry sight: "The Crown, thus preserved, consists only of a circlet of rushes, without any trace of thorns." A ray of light on Church fakery is thrown

by the closing comment: "That all the reputed holy thorns of which notice has survived cannot by any possibility be authentic will be disputed by no one; more than 700 such relics have been enumerated"! (*CE.* iv, 540, 541.)

As for the Holy Lance, which pierced the side of the dying God, also resurrected by pious diligence of "invention," its devious and dubious history is thus traced by our modern ecclesiastical mummery-monger: "A spear believed to be identical with that which pierced our Saviour's body, was venerated at Jerusalem at the close of the sixth century. The sacred relics of the Passion fell into the hands of the pagans. Many centuries afterwards (*i. e.* in 1241), the point of the Lance was presented by Baldwin to St. Louis, and it was enshrined with the Crown of Thorns in the Sainte Chapelle. Another part of the Lance is preserved under the dome of St. Peter's in Rome. . . . Rival lances are known to be preserved at Nuremberg, Paris, etc. Another lance claiming to be that which produced the wound in Christ's side is now preserved among the imperial insignia at Vienna; another is preserved at Cracow. Legend assigns the name of Longinus to the soldier who thrust the Lance into our Saviour's side; according to the same tradition, he was healed of ophthalmia and converted by a drop of the precious blood spurting from the wound." (viii, 773–4.)

There was also timely discovered, by some notable chance or miracle, the very stairway, "consisting of twenty-eight white marble steps, . . . the stairway leading once to the Prætorium of Pilate, hence sanctified by the footsteps of Our Lord during his Passion," as we are assured by *CE.* (viii, 505.) This famous relic, the "Holy Stairs," which somehow escaped the two destructions of Jerusalem and the ravages of time for nearly three centuries, was "brought from Jerusalem to Rome about 326 by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. . . . It is now before the Sancta Sanctorum (Holy of Holies) of the Lateran Palace. The Sancta Sanctorum receiving its name from the many precious relics preserved there, also contains the celebrated image of Christ, 'not made with hands,' which on certain occasions used to be carried through Rome in procession. . . . The Holy Stairs may only be ascended on the knees. . . . Finally Pius X, on 26 February, 1908, granted a plenary indulgence—[*i. e.* a permanent escape from Purgatory]—to be gained as often as the Stairs are devoutedly

ascended after confession and communion." (*CE.* viii, 505.) It is related that Father Luther was performing this holy penitential climb of the "Scala Sancta," when suddenly the vast sham and fraud of his religion burst upon his consciousness: the Reformation was a consequence. In passing this famous "Mother of Churches," St. John Lateran, we may admire the wonderful portrait of Jesus Christ which adorns its sacred walls; the painting of it was begun by Dr. St. Luke himself, but being left incomplete, it was finished by an angel.

ANCIENT FAKES YET ACCREDITED

Think not that these ancient frauds of the Church have been discarded in shame by the Church now that their fraudulent origin and purpose are exposed to public obloquy and ridicule. In full blaze of world attention and publicity of the Twentieth Century, God's own Vicar vouches before the world for these tawdry impostures, brought forth before the world to lend climax of superstitious solemnity to his crazy Crusade of prayer and incited pious hatred against the brave efforts of the Russians to undo the fell work of the Church in that unhappy land. Associated Press dispatches from Vatican City announce: "To lend emphasis to the protest here, celebrated relics kept at St. Peter's—a portion of the true cross; St. Veronica's Veil, with which Christ is said to have wiped His face on His way to Calvary, and the centurion's lance which pierced His Side—will be displayed." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* March 19, 1930.) "After the ceremony those present will receive benediction with the sacred relics." (*N. Y. Sun,* Mch. 13, 1930.) Nearby, "the stones of the pavement on which the Apostles [Peter and Paul] knelt in prayer and which are said to contain the impression of their knees, are now in the wall of the Church of Santa Francesca Romana." (*CE.* xiii, 797.) Such lying vouchers are fit setting for the crusade of unholy lies and hate against a people which for centuries has been kept in grossest ignorance and superstition by greedy priestcraft, now repudiated by its victims.

The foregoing solemn vouching for antique fakeries provoked a deal of skeptical ridicule throughout the world, even among some of the Faithful: so it must needs be emphasized by repetition, with some notable other Fake Relics added for "assurance doubly sure." So,

when the Pagan Festival of Easter dawned on the Pagan "Day of the Venerable Sun," His Royal-Holiness came forth in the full splendor of the Pagan Pontifex Maximus to celebrate the Event, and by his Infallible presence to vouch again for the genuineness of these holy spurious Relics. Probably he wore and ostentated in the joy of its recovery, the celebrated "so-called Episcopal Ring of St. Peter, rich with sapphires and diamonds," stolen from the Vatican treasury in 1925, and recently recaptured with the thief. (*Herald-Tribune*, Dec. 3, 1929.) It is possible that he sat in state in the very Throne or "Chair of St. Peter," which the Fisherman Pope used, as dubiously vouched by *CE.* under that caption. In any event, whatever throne he used was planted immediately above the grave where lies the headless cadaver of St. Peter himself, for "the skulls of Sts. Peter and Paul" were later viewed at the Lateran, and there "shown for the adoration of the Faithful." As announced in several Press dispatches, an inventory of the holy Relics and ceremonials is here recorded. In preparation for the Sacred Event in the Twentieth Century: "The major basilicas will all have on display their most precious relics. . . . The *purported* Cradle of Bethlehem [made out of an eighth century packing case] will be brought forth. Those attending mass at the Lateran will be able to view the skulls of Sts. Peter and Paul, and a bit of what *is believed* [by whom, not stated] to be the True Cross—[carried off entire in 614 by the Persians]; . . . the *reputed* Lance of the Roman centurion who speared the side of Christ, and the 'Holy Veil' or napkin offered to Christ by St. Veronica,"—who is a myth forged from "vera icon." (*A.P.* dispatch, Apl. 19, 1930.) Also: "A fragment of the Cross and two Thorns from the crown of the Saviour. . . . The Sancta Scala (Holy Stairs), . . . drew the usual Good Friday throngs of the Faithful today. . . . Processions were held inside the ancient edifices to *honor* the relics, [including] what, *according to tradition*, are the heads of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul . . . shown for the *adoration* of the Faithful." (*Herald-Tribune*, Apl. 19, 1930.) Then came the consummation and solemn Infallible accrediting of these "most precious relics":—"Pope Celebrates Easter Mass. . . . Relics of the Passion [surrounded him],—a *reputed* fragment of the Cross, a *piece* of the Spear which pierced [reputedly] the side of the Saviour, and the Veil of St. Veronica, . . . were displayed from the balcony

above the Papal Altar." (*Ibid*, Apl. 21, 1930.) Now at last, in Twentieth Century, "*Roma locuta est—causa finita est*"—and these originally bogus frauds are genuine and authentic Relics—for the Faithful who may believe it.

Samples of the "seed of the Serpent" of Eden, the scales that fell from the eyes of Elijah's servant, the original wicked flea, the two dwarf mummies of Bildad the Shu-hite and Ne-hi-miah, the 200 Philistine trophies brought in by David as his marriage dot (1 Sam. xviii, 25–27), the horn of salvation, and the instruments of Cornelius's Italian Band, are about the only honest-to-goodness authentic Biblical relics which seem not to be preserved among the countless holy fake treasures of Holy Church. The famous juvenile pocket-inventories of Tom Sawyer and Huckelberry Finn, and the monstrous fakeries of the late lamented Phineas Barnum, are paltry trivialities beside the countless and priceless Relic-treasures of Holy Church, religiously guarded for "veneration" by True Believers blessed by the privilege of paying—"the more you pay the more you merit" is the maxim—to gaze in rapt awe at, and to kiss and fondle, these ghastly and ghoulish, false and forged, bloody scraps and baubles of perverted piosity. The foreskin of the Child Christ miraculously preserved exists to this day; enough of his diapers and swaddling-cloths, as of the sanitary draperies of his Ever-Virgin Mother, are of record to stock a modern department store. During the era of the unholy Crusades the soldiers of Christ brought from the Holy Land countless numbers of duly certified bottles of the Milk of the Virgin Mother of God, and drove a thrifty business selling them to churches and superstitious dupes through Europe.

Yet in existence are several portraits of the Mother of God, "said to have been painted by St. Luke; they belong to the sixth century." (*CE.* xv, 471.) "There is still preserved at Messina a letter attributed to the Blessed Virgin, which, it is claimed, was written by her to the Messenians when Our Lady heard of their conversion by St. Paul." (x, 217; cf. list of several: i, 613.) "The Shroud of the Blessed Virgin is preserved in the Church of Gethsemane." (xiv, 775.) The Holy Winding Sheet or shroud of the Christ was formerly "exposed for veneration" at Troyes; but the Bishop "declared after due inquiry that the relic was nothing but a painting and opposed its exposition.

Clement VI, by four Bulls (1390), approved the exposition as lawful." After being stolen and hawked about, this sacred relic "is now exposed and honoured at Turin." (xv, 67–68.) There must be something wrong about this, for "The Diocese of Perigueux has a remarkable relic: The Holy Shroud of Christ, brought back after the first crusade. An official investigation in 1444 asserted the authenticity of the relic." (xi, 668.) The Minster treasury of the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle, or Aachen, where Charlemagne enshrined the Holy Thorns, "includes a large number of relics, vessels, and vestments, the most important being those known as the four 'Great Relics,' namely, the cloak of the Blessed Virgin, the swaddling-clothes of the infant Jesus, the loin-cloth worn by Our Lord on the Cross, and the cloth on which lay the head of John the Baptist after his beheading. They are exposed every seven years, and venerated by thousands of Pilgrims (139,628 in 1874, and 158,968 in 1881")! (i, 92.)

Without comment we let *CE.* record for the faith of its readers, several of the very notable and most remunerative Relics treasured by Holy Church. That they are all impossible, are all bogus, all crude forgeries and fakes only possible of credit by the most credulous child-minds, needs no comment. The sordid debasement of the human mind to the degree of credulity here displayed, the crass dishonesty of the false pretenses which give credit to these things for purposes of extortion from silly dupes of religion, the vastness of the grand larceny thus perpetrated in the name of God,—are beyond orderly comment.

"The possession of the seamless garment of Christ is claimed by the Cathedral of Trier *and* by the parish church of Argenteuil; the former claims that the relic was sent by the Empress St. Helena, basing their claim on a document sent by Pope Sylvester to the Church of Trier, but this cannot be considered genuine. . . . The relic itself offers no reason to doubt its genuineness. Plenary indulgences were granted to all pilgrims who should visit the cathedral of Trier at the time of the exposition of the Holy Coat, which was to take place every seven years." (vii, 400–1.) "The Church venerates the Holy Innocents, or Martyrs, the children massacred by Herod, estimated in various Liturgies as 14,000, 64,000, 144,000 boys. The Church of Paul's Outside the Walls is believed to possess the bodies of several

of the Holy Innocents. A portion of these relics was transferred by Sixtus V to Santa Maria Maggiore. The Church of St. Justina at Padua, the cathedrals of Lisbon and Milan, and other Churches also preserve bodies which they claim to be those of some of the Holy Innocents. It is impossible to determine the day or the year of the death of the Holy Innocents, since the chronology of the birth of Christ and the subsequent Biblical events is most uncertain"! (*CE.* vii, 419.)

In the cathedral of Cologne are preserved the skulls of the Three Wise Men who followed the Star of Bethlehem. In the neighboring Church of St. Gereon are distributed over the walls the bones from a whole cemetery, dug up and displayed as those of that mythical Saint and his Theban Band of 10,000 Martyrs; in fitting competition are the spoils of the neighboring graveyard, yielding the bones of St. Ursula and her 11,000 Virgin Martyrs. The miraculous bones of Santa Rosalia in Palermo are the bones of a deceased goat!

"The city of Tarascon has for its patron, St. Martha, who, according to the legend, delivered the country from a monster called 'Tarasque.' The Church of 'Saintes Marias de la Mer' contains three venerated tombs; according to a tradition which is attached to the legends concerning the emigration of St. Lazarus, St. Martha, St. Mary Magdalen, and St. Maximus, these tombs contain the bodies of the three Marys of the Gospels." (*CE.* i, 238.)

The Abbot Martin obtained for his monastery in Alsace the following inestimable articles: A spot of the blood of our Saviour; a piece of the True Cross; the arm of the Apostle James; part of the skeleton of John the Baptist; a bottle of the Milk of the Mother of God. (Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, ii, 57.) But perhaps none of these impostures surpassed in audacity that offered by a monastery in Jerusalem, which presented to the beholder ONE OF THE FINGERS OF THE HOLY GHOST! (Draper, *Conflict between Science and Religion*, p. 270.) Also there were displayed sundry choice collections of the *wing and tail feathers* of the said Holy Ghost, from time to time shed off or pulled out when, in the disguise of a Dove, It (or He or She) came down and perched on people. In England at the time of Henry VIII (1501), Our Lady's girdle was shown in not less than eleven places, and Our Lady's milk, in a condensed form, in

eight places. One of these girdles the good Queen-mother procured for Catherine of Aragon, on her marriage with Henry, to present to her when the expected time should come. During the plague of 1531, Henry VIII, for a goodly price, bought some precious relic waters to avert the plague from himself: a tear which Our Lord shed over Lazarus, preserved by an angel who gave it in a phial to Mary Magdalene; and a phial of the sweat of St. Michael when he contended with Satan, as recorded in the Book of Enoch and vouched for in the sacred Book of Jude. (Hackett, *Henry VIII*, pp. 11, 234.) The Cathedral of Arras, in France, possesses some highly venerated and remarkable relics, to wit, some of the Holy Manna which fell from Heaven in the year 371 during a severe famine; and the identical Holy Candle, a wax taper, which was presented by the Blessed Virgin to Bishop Lambert, in 1105, to stop an epidemic. (*CE.* i, 752.) This same waxen Holy Candle has burned continuously from 1105 to at least 1713 without being to the slightest degree diminished, as his view of it was then reported by Anthony Collins, in his *Discourse of Free Thinking;* he expresses the doubt whether the attendant clergy would permit a careful scrutiny to be made of the phenomenon.

A final job lot of these holy fetiches as recorded by Dr. McCabe with some pertinent comments, may be admired: "At Laon the chief treasures shown to the public were some milk and hair of the Virgin Mary. This was Laon's set-off to the rival attraction at Soissons, a neighboring town, which had secured one of the milk-teeth shed by the infant Jesus. There seems to have been enough of the milk of the Virgin—some of it was still exhibited in Spanish churches in the nineteenth century—preserved in Europe to feed a few calves. There was hair enough to make a mattress. There were sufficient pieces of 'the true cross' to make a boat. There were teeth of Christ enough to outfit a dentist (one monastery, at Charroux, had the complete set). There were so many sets of baby-linen of the infant Jesus, in Italy, France and Spain, that one could have opened a shop with them. One of the greatest churches in Rome had Christ's manger-cradle. Seven churches had his authentic umbilical cord, and a number of churches had his foreskin (removed at circumcision and kept as a souvenir by Mary). One church had the miraculous imprint of his little bottom on a stone on which he had sat. Mary herself had left enough wedding

rings, shoes, stockings, shirts, girdles, *etc.* to fill a museum; one of her shifts is still in the Chartres cathedral. One church had Aaron's rod. Six churches had the six heads cut off John the Baptist. . . . Every one of these things was, remember, in its origin, a cynical blasphemous swindle. Each of these objects was at first launched upon the world with deliberate mendacity. . . . One is almost disposed to ask for an application to the clergy of the law about obtaining money under false pretenses." (McCabe, *The Story of Religious Controversy*, p. 353.)

HOLY OILS, WATERS, AND FETICHES

These sacred and sanctified wonder-working objects are too numerous to more than mention a few of the most celebrated. Miraculous "waters" were in great profusion distilled or in some weird way extracted from numbers of dead Saints, "blessed" for a variety of purposes, and vended under the names of the productive Saints; as "The Water of St. Ignatius," of Sts. Adelhaid, Vincent Ferrer, Willibrord, etc. That of St. Hubert was notably a specific for the bite of mad dogs. The formulæ for these holy extracts or emulsions, with their properties and miraculous effects, are set forth in the official "Rituale Romanum." (*CE.* xv, 564.) The widely celebrated "Oil of Saints" was in immense vogue and possessed wonderful properties, as vouched by *CE.* under that title. This holy unction was "an oily substance which is said to have flowed, or still flows, from the relics or burial places of certain saints, and water which has in some way come in contact with their relics. These oils are or have been used by the faithful, with the belief that they will cure bodily and spiritual ailments . . . the custom prevailed of pouring oil over the relics or reliquaries of martyrs and then gathering it in vases, sponges or pieces of cloth. This oil, *oleum martyris*, was distributed among the faithful as a remedy against sickness. . . . At present the most famous of the oils of saints is the oil of St. Walburga (*Walburgis oleum*). It flows from the stone slab and the surrounding metal plate on which rest the relics of St. Walburga in her church in Eichstadt in Bavaria. The fluid is caught in a silver cup and is distributed to the faithful for use against diseases of the body and soul. Similarly of the Oil of St. Menas, of which thou-

sands of little flasks have recently been discovered, found at many places in Europe and Africa; there is also a like Oil of St. Nicholas of Myra, which emanates from his relics at Bari in Italy, whither they were brought in 1087. A certain substance like flour, is recorded by St. Gregory of Tours, to emanate from the sepulchre of St. John the Evangelist; also that from the sepulchre of the Apostle St. Andrew emanated manna in the form of flour and fragrant oil." A list half a column long is given of other saints from whose relics or sepulchres oil is said to have flowed. (*CE.* xi, 228–9.)

THE AGNUS DEI

"These are discs of wax impressed with the figure of a lamb and blessed at stated seasons by the Pope. The rule still followed is that the great consecration of the Agnus Dei takes place only in the first year of each pontificate and every seventh year afterwards. It seems probable that they had their beginning in some *pagan* usage of charms or amulets, from which the ruder populace were weaned by the employment of this Christian substitute [charm or amulet] blessed by prayer. The early history of Catholic ceremonial affords numerous parallels for this Christianizing of pagan rites. . . . So the purpose of these consecrated medallions is to protect those who wear or possess them from all malign influences. In the prayers of blessing, special mention is made of the perils from storm and pestilence, from fire and flood, and also of the dangers to which women are exposed in childbirth. Miraculous effects have been believed to follow the use of these objects of piety. Fires are said to have been extinguished, and floods stayed. They were much subject to counterfeit, the making of which has been strictly prohibited by various papal bulls,"—(this proving the obtaining of money by false pretenses in the papal monopoly of peddling them to the moron Faithful). "There are also Agnus Deis made from wax mingled with the dust which is believed to be that of the bones of martyrs; these are called Paste de' SS. Martiri, or Martyrs' Paste." (*CE.* i, 220.) The peddling of these frauds has not yet been forbidden by the criminal code, nor by the Vicars of God who gain by them. Three pages of a separate article are devoted to the potent prayers in Liturgies, several in doggerel

Latin verse, on pages 221–223. One of these inspired Papal invocations over the sacred amulets is quoted by Dr. White:

"O God, . . . we humbly beseech thee that thou wilt bless these waxen forms, figured with the image of an innocent lamb, . . . that, at the touch and sight of them, the faithful shall break forth into praises, and that the crash of hailstorms, the blast of hurricanes, the violence of tempests, the fury of winds, and the malice of thunderbolts may be tempered, and evil spirits flee and tremble before the standard of the holy cross, which is graven upon them." (White, *Warfare between Science and Religion*, i, 343.)

The recurrence in modern times of the above recited catastrophes raised by imps of the devil, not unseldom doing damage even to the Faithful and to their sacred edifices, must be due to the punible neglect to have a supply of these thaumaturgic crackers on hand at the time and place of the flagellations of the Evil One.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE "MYSTICAL MARRIAGE"

What to a Rationalist may seem a very inhuman superstition—though often attenuated by the clerical formula "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," pronounced to his earthly vicar by the happy "Bride of Jesus Christ," is the unctuously so-called Mystical Marriage, the nuptial ceremony whereby a deluded female enters into the joys of her Lord without actually sharing them. This holy mummery is thus described by the oft-cited Exponent of Catholic Truth:

"Christian virginity has been considered from the earliest centuries as a special offering made by the soul to its spouse, Christ. . . . In many of the lives of the Saints, the mystical marriage consists of a vision in which Christ tells a soul that He takes it for His bride, presenting it with the customary ring, and the apparition is accompanied by a ceremony; the Blessed Virgin Mary, saints and angels are present. . . . Moreover, as a wife should share in the life of her husband, and as Christ suffered for the redemption of mankind, the mystical bride enters into a more intimate participation of His sufferings,—[*casus omissus* being the sharing of the nuptial joys also involved in the notion of marriage]. Accordingly, in three cases out of four, the mystical marriage has been granted to stigmatics. History [priest-written, of course] has recorded seventy-seven mystical marriages, in connection with female saints, blesseds and venerables";—a number of whom are named, including, appropriately, St. Mary Magdalen *dei Pazzi*—"of the Crazy Ones"—as were they all. (*CE.* ix, 703.)

CHAPTER VII

THE "TRIUMPH" OF CHRISTIANITY

"Destruction to the Triumphant Beast!"
Giordano Bruno.
"Ecrasez l'Infame!"
Voltaire.

EVEN MORE INDUCIVE than its own sweet reasonableness and persuasive truth, as accredited by the records and vouchers we have examined, were several very effective forcible aids to the propagation of the new Faith in the hearts and minds—and upon the bodies—of the Pagan populations. The strange phenomenon of the persistence of Christianity into the XXth Century can be understood only by consideration of the means employed for, and the medium of unculture permitting, the propagation of this forged faith through the centuries of the Dark Ages of Faith, with its medieval "hangover" into the present scientific era.

PRIESTLY TERRORISM

GOD-ORDAINED MURDER FOR UNBELIEF

The Jewish forgers of the near-sacred Books of Enoch, Esdras, etc., had pilfered from the Sacred Books and System of Zoroaster of Persia, their superstitions of angels and devils and hell-fire, and had invented the infernal doctrines of Original Sin and eternal damnation therefor,—all which counterfeit passed to and became current among the religious zealots of the debased Judaism then in vogue. Attributing their "revelation" or invention to Jesus Christ himself, the second-century forging Fathers of the new Faith bodily plagiarized these ready-made Pagan-Jewish superstitions, and by the potent "Sign of the Cross" metamorphosed them into holy "revelations" and inspired truths, the which to doubt was to be damned.

The fanatic Hebrew religion and its derivative Christianity are the only religions ever known on earth based on and maintained by systematic persecution and murder. God-given laws of murder for disbelief were decreed at Sinai. A holy monopoly of priests was founded, and the divine ukase ordained: "They shall keep their priesthood, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." (Num. iii, 10.) Murder was God-decreed: "The man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest, . . . even that man shall die." (Deut. xvii, 12.) Again the Jealous God decrees: "He that sacrificeth to any other god—[thus admitting the other gods]—save unto Yahveh alone, he shall be utterly destroyed." (Ex. xxii, 20; Deut. xvii, 2–5.) The *ne plus ultra* of inspired atrocity of Divine legislation is this infamy devised by priests and attributed to their mythic God: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy daughter, or *the wife of thy bosom,* or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go serve other [more civilized] gods, . . . Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But *thou shalt surely kill him:* thine hand shall be the first upon him *to put him to death,* and afterwards the hand of all the people. And *thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die"!* (Deut. xiii, 6, 8–10; xvii, 2–7.) Old Elijah murdered by his God's help two companies of soldiers and their captains by calling down fire from heaven, and 450 priests of Baal and 400 priests of the phallic Asherahs, to prove by these 1000 murders "if I be a man of the gods." (2 Kings, i, 12.) His old side-partner Elisha stood by and watched God-sent bears which he had invoked tear and eat forty small children who ill-manneredly thumbed their noses at his old bald pate; and throughout the blessed Old Testament of God some hundreds of thousands of people were murdered by God outright and by his holy priestly agents, simply for differences of opinion or of conduct with respect—or disrespect—to the holy Hebrew God and religion. Only, fortunately, probably little of it is true.

The Son of the Hebrew God came in course of time to Jewry ostensibly to make amends for some of his Father's damning vengeances. He came "to fulfill the law"; not only that, he overdid it and added to it sundry fiery climaxes of cursing and damnation, religious big-

otry and intolerance unique to the "Gospel of Love" and of redemptive salvation. For sanctions *ad terrorem* of the new preachments of Christ who "came to bring the sword," Jesus himself kindled the fires of Hell and decreed eternal damnation for unbelief: "He that believeth not shall be damned"; "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"; "He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him"! These genial persuasions to belief in the priests were added to by Paul the Persecutor; harking back to his God's Law of Sinai: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy; . . . Of how much sorer punishment . . . shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"—"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever: and they shall have no rest day or night" from "the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God"! All this is for the happy Hereafter; but the pious deviltry begins by Hell-on-earth, as the gentle Jesus himself prescribed: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke, xix, 27.) The whole body of Apostles appealed for Divine permit, that "we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them" (Luke ix, 54), who sought to imitate their pious devil-enchantments. Peter, Prince of Apostles, takes up the bloody cue: "Every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed" (Acts, iii, 23); and Bigot Paul enjoins proscription, boycott and murder for the dissentient: "For there are many *unruly* and vain *talkers . . . whose mouths must be stopped*" (Titus, i, 10, 11): and "He that troubleth you . . . I would they were even *cut off*" (Gal. v, 10, 12). The Church Persecutrix is thus amply warranted of its God in its holy task of "preserving the purity of the Faith" by fire and sword. Right quickly it began to "deal damnation 'round the land on all they deemed the foe" of the Faith and its priests. The rule of death to heretics was proclaimed by the "Prince" and executed by sword and stake by his holy "Successors" so long as they were let: "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, . . . and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter, ii, 1); and his arch-coadjutor Paul continued to go up and

down the land "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against all who despised his holy preachments.

As we shall hear confessed: "Toleration came in only when Faith went out; lenient measures were resorted to only where power to apply more severe measures was wanting"! (*CE.* vii, 262.) The infernal fact that Intolerance is the "natural accompaniment" of Religion, and that obsessed religionists are no different from a man-burning mob of lynchers, is thus again confessed: "A kind of iron law would seem *to dispose mankind to religious intolerance.* (p. 35.) . . . When Christianity became the religion of the Empire, and still more when the peoples of Northern Europe became Christian nations, the close alliance of Church and State, . . . heresy, *in consequence,* was a crime which secular rulers *were bound in duty* to punish. . . . The heretic, in a word, was simply *an outlaw* whose offense, in the popular mind, deserved and sometimes received a punishment as summary as that which is often dealt out in our day by an infuriated populace to the authors of justly detested crimes. That such intolerance was not peculiar to Catholicism, but was the NATURAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF DEEP RELIGIOUS CONVICTION in those, also, who abandoned the Church, is evident from the measures taken by some of the Reformers—[ex-children of True Church, who were there schooled and drilled in the infamies]—against those *who differed from them in matters of belief.* . . . Moreover, . . . the spirit of intolerance prevalent in many of the American colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may be cited in proof thereof." (*CE.* viii, 35, 36.) The only way to kill the pernicious flower of Faith is to uproot and destroy the noxious weed!

THE GOSPEL OF FEAR AND TREMBLING

Such as this, repeated *ad infinitum* for terror, coupled with the threats of the quick "Second Coming," when the Unbelievers should receive reward "unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v, 29), effectively seared the Gospel of fear and trembling into the superstitious Pagan dupes of Christianity.

Hear for a moment the zealous Father Tertullian throw the fear of Hell into the trembling Pagan patrons of the theatre and the cir-

cus. As quoted by Gibbon from the *De Spectaculis* (Ch. 30), they are introduced with some pertinent words descriptive of the spirit of bigoted Christianity: "These rigid sentiments, which had been unknown to the ancient world, appear to have infused a spirit of bitterness into a system of love and harmony. The ties of blood and friendship were frequently torn asunder by the difference of religious faith; and the Christians, who, in this world, found themselves oppressed by the power of the Pagans, were sometimes seduced by resentment and spiritual pride to delight in the prospect of their future triumph. 'You are fond of spectacles,' exclaims the stern Tertullian; 'expect the greatest of all spectacles, the last and eternal judgment of the universe. How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs, and fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates, who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians, more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings; so many dancers—.' But the humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the rest of this infernal description, which the zealous African pursues in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticisms." (Gibbon, Ch. xv, p. 146–7.)

UNBORN BABES TO BURN FOREVER

The damnable doctrine of Infant Damnation was one of the most terrifying and effective impostures of the Church to drive helpless victims into the fold of Christ. Infamous enough was the earlier doctrine of exclusive salvation, that the unbaptized adult, the individual outside the Church was the heir to eternal damnation. But soon the terror was extended to the just-born infant, to even the fœtus in its mother's womb. St. Augustine affirmed this atrocity with all his vehemence; all the Fathers without exception dinned it eternally,—as yet today. A treatise of the greatest authority, *De Fide*, long attributed to Augustine, but now known to be the work of Bishop St. Fulgentius (*CE.* vi, 317) thus states the horrid doctrine: "Be assured, and

doubt not, that not only men who have attained the use of their reason, but also little children who have begun to live in their mothers' womb and have there died, or who, having been just born, have passed away from the world without the sacrament of holy baptism, administered in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire; for although they have committed no sin by their own will, they have nevertheless drawn with them the condemnation of original sin, by their carnal conception and nativity." (sec. 70.) Lecky, who quotes the passage, thus comments the effects as witnessed in practice throughout the Middle Ages: "Nothing indeed can be more curious, nothing more deeply pathetic, than the record of the many ways by which the terror-stricken mothers attempted to evade the awful sentence of their Church. Sometimes the baptismal water was sprinkled upon the womb; sometimes the still-born child was baptised, in hopes that the Almighty would antedate the ceremony; sometimes the mother invoked the Holy Spirit to purify by His immediate power the infant that was to be born; sometimes she received the Host or obtained absolution, and applied them to the benefit of her child. For the doctrine of the Church had wrung the mother's heart with an agony that was too poignant for even that submissive age to bear." (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 362–364.) And all this on account of an apple eaten four thousand years before they were born; willed by the Deity who had foreordained their birth and premature death, before His Holy Church could come at the Baptismal fees!

A CONTRAST IN TOLERANCE

With the miraculous "conversion of Constantine"—to at least the practical advantages of Christianity as providing numerous partizans to his ambitious cause and great numbers of recruits to his armies, the Church of Christ emerged from obscurity and catacombs; by dint of servile flatteries, bold impostures, and shameless forgeries, of which we have seen examples, it quickly insinuated itself into imperial favor and popular regard, and soon dominated the superstitious court and populace. This was a signal triumph for Faith, which now became popular and the means to preferment; the truth of the Christ did now

more rapidly spread and abound. That such considerations, much more of this material world worldly than of the other-world of the spiritual, best further the cause of Christ and are its most powerful propaganda, is thus delicately confessed: "When a Government, for instance, reserves its favors and functions for the adherents of the State religion, the army of civil servants becomes a more powerful body of missionaries than the ordained ministers"! (*CE.* vii, 259.) Thus began that funest League with Death and Covenant with Hell between State and Church, persistent yet to this day!

THE EDICT OF MILAN (*313*)

But until the Christian priests poisoned his mind with their arrogant pretensions, Constantine was truly liberal in his policy of "religious indifferentism" or toleration. His broad-minded and statesman-like grasp of the principles of liberty of belief in any and all forms of religious superstition, or in none at all, rose to heights never since attained until Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, reflected in Art. VI and Amendment I of the Federal Constitution. Constantine's Edict of Milan, of 313, was the first charter of religious freedom and toleration, securing equality and liberty of worship to the Christians,—and very quickly repudiated by them as against all others; it is preserved and thus quoted by Lactantius:

"Not many days after the victory, Licinius . . . on the ides of June (13th), while he and Constantine were consuls for the third time, he commanded the following edict for the restoration of the Church, directed to the president of the province, to be promulgated:—

"When we, Constantine and Licinius, emperors, had an interview at Milan, and conferred together with respect to the good and security of the commonweal, it seemed to us that, amongst those things that are profitable to mankind in general, the reverence paid to the Divinity merited our first and chief attention, and that it was proper that the Christians and all others should have *liberty to follow that mode of religion which to each of them appeared best;* so that God, who is seated in heaven, might be benign and propitious to us, and to everyone under our government. And therefore we judged it a salutary measure, and one highly consonant to right reason, that no man should be denied leave of attaching himself to the rites of the Christians, or to whatever other religion his mind directed him, that thus the supreme Divinity, to whose worship we freely devote ourselves, might continue to devote His favour and beneficence to us. . . . For it befits the

well-ordered State and the tranquillity of our times that each individual be allowed, according to his own choice, to worship the Divinity; and we mean not to derogate aught from the honour due to any religion or its votaries." (Lact., *Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died,* ch. xlviii; *ANF.* VII, 320; Eusebius, *HE.* viii, 17.)

CHRISTIAN INTOLERANCE

But no sooner had the priests of the new Superstition foisted themselves securely into power, and by their threats of hell-fire dominated the superstitious minds of the ex-Pagan Constantine and his sons and successors, than the old decrees of persecution under which the Christians had themselves suffered, were revamped and with fiendish ferocity turned by them into engines of fearful torture and destruction of Pagans, Jews, and "heretic" Christians alike; and religious intolerance became the corner-stone of the Church Persecutrix. In the famous Code of Theodosius, about 384, it was at priestly instigation enacted:

"We desire that all the people under our clemency should live by that religion which divine Peter the apostle is said to have given the Romans. . . . We desire that heretics and schismatists be subjected to various fines. . . . We decree also that we shall cease making sacrifices to the gods. And if anyone has committed such a *crime, let him be stricken with the avenging sword.*" (*Cod. Theod.* xvi, 1, 2; v, 1; x, 4.)

What a shaming Christian contrast to the Pagan Edict of Milan, granting religious liberty and tolerance to all! In these laws of the now "Christian" empire priestly intolerance is made the law of the land; the accursed words "Inquisition of the Faith" and "Inquisitors" first appear in this Christian Code. "Theodosius I was called the Great because he was the first Emperor to act against heathenism, and also because he contributed to the victory over the Arians." (*CE.* iii, 101.)

Even the "Infidel" Moslem, in his crude Koran, teaches a doctrine of tolerance to shame the Bible and the Christians: "Those who follow the Jewish religion, the Christians, the Sabeans, and whatever others believe in God and practice doing good, all these shall receive their rec-

ompense from the Lord. . . . Virtue does not consist in turning the face towards the East nor towards the West to pray, but in being tolerant." (*Quran*, ix, 59, 76;—from Spanish text.)

FAITH ENFORCED BY LAWS OF MURDER

Holy Fraud and Forgery having achieved their initial triumph for the Faith, the "Truth of Christ" must now be maintained and enforced upon humanity by a millennial series of bloody brutal Clerical Laws of pains and penalties, confiscations, civil disabilities, torture and death by rack, fire and sword, which constitute the foulest chapter of the Book of human history—the History of the Church!

When the Christians were weak and powerless and subjected to occasional persecutions as "enemies of the human race," they were vocal and insistent advocates of liberty of conscience and freedom to worship whatever God one chose; the Christian "Apologies" to the Emperors abound in eloquent pleas for religious tolerance; and this was granted to them and to all by the Edict of Milan and other imperial Decrees. But when by the favor of Constantine they got into the saddle of the State, they at once grasped the sword and began to murder and despoil all who would not pretend to believe as the Catholic priest commanded them to believe. When today the Church screams "Persecution!" and "Bigotry!" at every criticism and every attempt to restrict it in some of its presumptuous usurpations, let it recall a few of the laws of intolerance, plunder and death which it procured and enforced from the moment it got the prostituted power, so long as that power lasted.

Beginning with Constantine, and under succeeding "Christian" emperors, there is a series of scores of laws which the Christians procured to be enacted for the suppression and persecution to death of Pagans, heretics and Jews. These laws and edicts are to be found in the Codes of Theodosius and of Justinian, the two famous codifications of Roman Law. To exhibit the progressive and persistent system of proscription to which all but themselves were persecutingly subjected by the "Orthodox" Christians, I shall simply quote the titles of some of these laws, with indication of the names of the Emperors issuing

them, the dates and number of the laws, and the Code or other source in which it is preserved.

LAWS OF CONSTANTINE

The earliest laws of Constantine were those granting religious toleration, as the Edict of Milan (313) already quoted, and laws for the redress of injuries done to Christians; such as release of prisoners and those in servitude, and the restoration of property; chapter 36 declares that "The Church is the heir of those who leave no kindred; and free gifts to it are confirmed"; chapter 41: "Those who have purchased property belonging to the Church or received it as a gift, are to restore it." (Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, *N&PNF*. Bk. II, chs. xxiv-xliii.)

"Edict to the People of the Provinces Concerning the Error of Polytheism." (*Ib.* chs. xlviii–xlix.)

"Granting Money to the Churches." (*Ib.* Bk, x, ch. vi.)

"Catholic Clergy exempt from Certain Civic Duties." (*Code Theod.* xvi, 2, 1; 313.) "The Catholic Church freed from Tribute." (*Id.* xi, 1, 1; 315.) "Clergymen freed from Financial Burdens." (*Id.* xvi, 2, 2; 319.) "The Church allowed to Receive Bequests." (*Id.* xvi, 2, 4; 321.)

"Bishop's Powers as Judges and Witnesses": "Whatever may be settled by a sentence of bishops shall ever be held as sacred and venerable. . . . All testimony given, even by a single bishop, shall be accepted without hesitation, by every judge, neither shall the testimony of any other witness be heard, when the testimony of a bishop is brought forward by either party"! (*Const. Sirm.* i; 333.)

"The *Day of the Sun* a Time of Rest." "All judges, and city folk and all craftsmen shall rest on the *venerated day of the Sun.*" (*Cod. Just.* iii, 12, 2; 321.)

"As it has seemed most unworthy that the Day of the Sun, famous by its venerable character, . . . Therefore on the festive day." (*Cod. Theod.* ii, 8, 1; 321.)

A number of laws follow in favor of the Pagans, and while prohibiting "private divination and soothsaying," and "Malevolent Magic Prohibited, but Beneficial Magic Encouraged"; also exempting Pagan Flamens, priests and magistrates from sundry restrictions and disabilities. No law of Constantine seems to be preserved which prescribes active persecution; he seems to have sought to hold an even

balance of toleration to Pagans and Christians. But that he did enact such laws seems to be proved by recital in the first of the laws of his sons, Constantius and Constans, who were Arian heretics.

LAWS OF CONSTANTIUS AND CONSTANS

"Sacrifice Prohibited.": "Let superstition cease and the folly of sacrifices be abolished. Whoever has dared in the face of *the law of the divine prince, our father* [Constantine] . . . to make sacrifices, shall have appropriate penalty, and immediate sentence dealt to him." (*Cod. Theod.* xvi, 10, 2; 341.)

"All Temples Closed and Sacrifices Forbidden." . . . "but if any one commit any offense of this sort, *let him fall by the avenging sword," and his property forfeited;* judges neglecting to "mete out penalties for these offenses, they shall be similarly punished." (*Cod. Theod.* xvi, 10, 4; 346.)

"Sacrificing and Idolatry Punishable by Death." "We order that all found guilty of attending sacrifices or of worshipping idols shall *suffer capital punishment."* (*Id.* xvi, 10, 6; 356.)

LAWS OF GRATIAN AND THEODOSIUS

"Wills of Apostate Christians to be Set Aside": "The right of making a will shall be taken from Christians who become pagans; and if such persons make wills, they shall be set aside without regard to circumstances." (*Cod. Theod.* xvi, 7, 1; 381: cf. *Cod. Justin.* i, 7, 2; 382.)

"The Right to Bequeath or Inherit Property Denied Apostates": "We deny to Christians and the faithful who have adopted pagan rites and religion all power of making a will in favor of any person whatsoever, in order *that they may be without the Roman law* [outlaws]; . . . even of enjoying a will with the power of acquiring an inheritance." (*Cod. Theod.* xvi, 7, 2; 383.) "The Right of Making a Will Denied Christians Who enter Temples." (*Id.* xvi, 7, 3; 383.)

LAWS OF THEODOSIUS AND VALENTINIAN

"Testamentary Disqualification for Christian Apostates," and Outlawry as Witnesses.—"Those who betray the sacred faith and profane holy baptism are *shut off from association of all* and *from giving testimony.* . . . They may not exercise the right of making a will, nor enter upon any inheritance; *they may not be made anyone's heir."* (*Id.* xvi, 7, 4; 391.)

"Sacrificing and Visiting Shrines Prohibited." (*Id.* xvi, 10, 10; 391.) —"Sacrifices Forbidden and Temples Closed." (*Id.* xvi, 10, 11; 391.)

"PAGANISM OUTLAWED."—"If any one dares [to sacrifice, etc.],

let any man be free to accuse him and let him receive, as one *guilty of lese majesté,* . . . for it is sufficiently a *crime.*" (*Id.* xvi, 10. 12; 392.)

LAWS OF HONORIUS AND ARCADIUS

"Pagan Holidays Abolished." (*Cod. Theod.* ii, 8, 22; 395.)—"Privileges of Pagan Priests Abolished." (*Id.* xvi, 10, 14; 396.)—"Rural Temples to be Destroyed." (*Id.* xvi, 10, 16; 339.)—"Temples to be Appropriated by the Churches." (*Id.* xvi, 5, 43; 408.)—"Temples to be Appropriated by the Churches. Temple Buildings and their Revenues to be Confiscated and Idols and Shrines to be Destroyed." (*Id.* xvi, 5, 43; xvi, 10, 19; 407.)

"Only Catholics to Serve as Palace Guards." (*Cod. Theod.* xvi. 5, 42; 408.)

"Laws Against the Pagans to be Enforced": "The Donatists and other vain heretics and those others *who cannot be converted to the worship of the Catholic communion,* Jews and Gentiles who are vulgarly known as pagans; . . . Let all judges understand, and not fail to carry out all decrees against such persons." (*Id.* xvi, 5, 46; 409.)

"Pagans Barred from Civil and Military Offices." (*Id.* xvi, 10, 21; 416.) "Existing Laws against Pagans to be Enforced." (*Id.* xvi, 10, 22; 423.) —"Pagans Who Sacrifice Shall *Lose their Property and be Exiled.*" (*Id.* xvi, 10, 23; 423.)

"Pagan Superstition to be Rooted Out": "We are extirpating all heresies and all falsehoods, all schisms and all superstitions of the pagans and all errors that are *inimicable to the Catholic religion.* . . . And since all attempt at supplication is denied forever, they will be punished with the severity befitting *crimes.*" (*Id.* xvi, 5, 63; 423.)

"Pagans Barred from Pleading a Case or Serving as Soldiers": ". . . and *every sect unfriendly with the Catholics should be driven out of every city in order that they may not be sullied by the contagious presence of criminals. We deny to Jews or pagans the right of pleading a case in court or of serving as soldiers.*" (*Const. Sirm.* No. 6; 425.)

LATER LAWS AGAINST PAGANISM

"Pagan Rites Forbidden and Bequests for Pagan Cults Prohibited." (*Cod. Just.* i, 11, 9; 472.)

"Baptized Persons who follow Pagan Practices to Suffer Death. Provisions for the Conversion of the Unbaptized. *Pagans Forbidden to Give Instruction.*" (*Cod. Just.* 1, 11, 10; no date given.)

"Pagans Barred from Office and their Real Property Confiscated." "The Emperors Justin and Justinian. . . . It is our intention to restore the existing laws which affect the rest of the heretics of whatever name they are, (and we label as heretic whoever is not a member of the Catholic Church and of our orthodox and holy faith); likewise the pagans who attempt to

introduce the worship of many gods, and the Jews and the Samaritans. . . . We forbid any of the above-mentioned persons to aspire to any dignity or to acquire civil or military office or to attain to any rank." (*Id.* i, 5, 12; 527.)

Thus was Pagan Superstition proscribed and destroyed by Christian law and sword; and the identical Pagan Superstitions under the veneer of the name of Christian established and enthroned. The subject is thoroughly examined by Prof. Maude A. Huttmann, in *The Establishment of Christianity Through the Proscription of Paganism;* (Columbia University Press, 1914).

BLOODY RECORD BOASTED

A graphic sketch of the origin, the universal scope, and the crushing effect of the early imperial laws, supplemented and expanded by those of medieval and more modern times, is given by *CE.*, related with all the sinister and cynical insolence, sophistry and hypocrisy of intolerant bigotry. To its Christ it imputes the horrid justification of the sword and the infernal principles of butchery whereby the Church Murderess has "made a hell of earth to merit heaven." This recital is not alone of ancient sacred history; *CE.* admits: "These primitive views on heresy have been faithfully transmitted and acted on by the Church in subsequent ages; there is no break in the tradition from St. Peter to Pious X." (vii, 259.) The principles are yet alive and cherished, their practical application has only for the time being "fallen into abeyance," only, for the reason that in these modern skeptical times "the power to apply more severe measures is wanting." Here is the admitted ecclesiastical record of repression and murder to maintain its forged and fraudulent faith:

"When Constantine had taken upon himself the office of lay bishop (*episcopus externus*) and *put the secular arm at the service of the Church,* the laws against heretics became more and more rigorous. Under the purely ecclesiastical discipline no temporal punishment could be inflicted on the obstinate heretic, except the damage which might arise to his personal dignity through being *deprived of all intercourse with his former brethren. But under the Christian emperors rigorous measures were enforced* against the goods and persons of here-

tics. From the time of Constantine to Theodosius and Valentinian III (313–424) various penal laws were enacted against heretics as being guilty of *crime against the State.* In both the Theodosian and Justinian codes they were styled infamous persons; all intercourse was forbidden to be held with them; they were deprived of all offices of profit and dignity in the civil administration, while all burdensome offices, both of the camp and of the curia, were imposed upon them; they were disqualified from disposing of their own estates by will, or of accepting estates bequeathed to them by others; they were denied the right of giving or receiving donations, of contracting, buying, and selling; pecuniary fines were imposed upon them; they were often proscribed and banished, and in many cases scourged before being sent into exile. In some particularly aggravated cases sentence of death was pronounced upon heretics, though seldom executed in the time of the Christian emperors of Rome. Theodosius is said to be the first who pronounced heresy a capital crime; this law was passed in 382 against [several named sects of heretics]. Heretical teachers were forbidden to propagate their doctrines, publicly or privately; to hold public disputations; to ordain bishops, presbyters, or other clergy; to hold religious meetings; to build conventicles or to avail themselves of money bequeathed to them for that purpose. Slaves were allowed to inform against their heretical masters and to purchase their freedom by coming over to the Church. The children of heretical parents were denied their patrimony and inheritance unless they returned to the Catholic Church. The books of heretics were ordered to be burned. (*Vide Codex Theodosianus,* lib. XVI, tit. 5, "*De Hæreticis.*")

"This legislation remained in force and with even greater severity in the Kingdoms formed by the victorious barbarian invaders on the ruins of the Roman Empire in the West. The *burning of heretics* was first decreed in the eleventh century. The Synod of Verona (1184) imposed on bishops the *duty to search out heretics* in their dioceses and hand them over to the secular power. Other Synods, and the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) under Pope Innocent III, repeated and enforced this decree, especially the Synod of Toulouse (1229), which established inquisitors in every parish (one priest and two laymen). *Everyone was bound to denounce heretics, the names of the witnesses were kept secret;* after 1243, when Innocent III sanctioned the laws

of Emperor Frederick II and of Louis IX against heretics, *torture was applied in trials;* the *guilty persons* were delivered up to the civil authorities and actually *burnt at the stake.*

"Paul III (1542) established, and Sixtus V organized, the Roman Congregation of the Inquisition, or Holy Office, a regular court of justice [!] dealing with heresy and heretics. (See Roman Congregations.) The Congregation of the Index, instituted by St. Pius V, has for its province the care of faith and morals in literature; it proceeds against printed matter very much as the Holy Office proceeds against persons (see *Index of Prohibited Books*). The present pope, Pius X (1909), has decreed the establishment in every diocese of a board of censors and of a vigilance committee whose functions are to find out and report on writings and persons tainted with the *heresy of Modernism* (Encycl. 'Pascendi,' 8 Sept. 1907). —[At another place the pious clerical reason for this flagrant attempt against the mind and its liberty of inquiry is thus with unctuous priestly speciousness stated: "for it is notorious that clever sophistry coated with seductive language may render even gross errors of faith palatable to a *guileless and innocent heart*"! (*CE.* xiv, 766).]—The present-day legislation against heresy has lost nothing of its ancient severity; but the penalties on heretics are now only of the spiritual order; all the punishments which require the intervention of the secular arm have *fallen into abeyance.* . . .

"The Church's legislation on heresy and heretics is often reproached with cruelty and intolerance. Intolerant it is; in fact its *raison d'être* is intolerance of doctrines subversive of the Faith. Cruelty only comes when the punishment exceeds the *requirements* of the case. . . . It suffices to remark that the inquisitors only pronounced on the guilt of the accused and then handed him over to the secular power to be dealt with according to the laws framed by emperors and kings—[at the instigation of the Church!].

"*Toleration came in only when faith went out;* lenient measures were resorted to ONLY WHERE POWER TO APPLY MORE SEVERE MEASURES WAS WANTING. . . . Christ says: '*Do not think that I am come to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*' The history of heresy *verifies this prediction*"! (*CE.* vii, 256–262, *passim.*)

The Church Persecutrix, under this forged Christ-Lie, has shed

oceans more of blood than of its boasted "light" upon religion-cursed Christendom. The only "light" it has diffused has been from the flames of "heretic" cities, and the lurid fires of myriads of *Autos-da-Fe*, kindled by hypocrite priests, burning in agony the bodies of countless heroic men and women who scorned to prostitute their minds to the sinister lies of priestcraft, and who have dared defy with their lives the blighting "rule and ruin" dominion of the power-lusting Church.

With a shudder of undying loathing for the cruel cynical Hypocrite, we may admire the sweet charity of tender mercy displayed by the Holy Church of the Christ, exampled in the sanctimonious *Formula of Judgment* whereby its Holy Inquisition handed over the racked and broken errant Child of Faith to the prostituted Secular Arm for the final Act of Murder—the blessed *Auto-da-Fe*, with a prayer for the hated heretics: "*Ut quam clementissime et sine sanguinis effusionem puniretur*—should be punished as mildly as possible and without the shedding of blood"! The while Their Holinesses kept a standing Decree of Indulgences from the pangs of Purgatory for all the hoodlum Faithful who would please and glorify God by attending the sacred ceremonials of Burning, and especially to those who would aid God and the priests by fetching fagots for the consecrated fires, and throw water on the wood so that the priest-set flames would be slower in their purifying work and allow the writhing "Obstinate" longer time to make Peace with God and Holy Church by meet Repentance; in which event, the "reconciled" Child of Faith would be dragged from the flames only partly cremated, and returned to prison cell there to agonize out the remainder of his life in rapt contemplation of the beauties and sweetness of the blessed Christian Religion, crooning "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

The foregoing loathsome boasted record of the Church, sinister and infamous as it is, may be complemented by the following cynical and sophistical recital of the mental and moral debauch of ignorance imposed by the Church, concluding with the formal admission that "the theocratic State was *called upon* [by its prostituted mistress the Church] to *avenge with the pyre*" defiance of the lying fraudulent pretensions of the Church:

"During the Middle Ages the Church guarded the *purity and genuineness of her Apostolic doctrine* [!] through the institution of the

ecclesiastical (and State) Inquisition. . . . Following the example of the Apostles, the Church today watches zealously over the purity and integrity of her doctrine, *since on this rests her whole system of faith and morals, the whole edifice of Catholic thought, ideals, and life.* For this purpose the Church instituted the Index of Prohibited Books, which is intended to deter Catholics from the unauthorized reading of books dangerous to faith or morals, for it is notorious that clever sophistry coated with seductive language may render even gross errors of faith palatable to a guileless and innocent heart. (p. 766.) . . . Now, formal heresy was likewise strongly condemned by the Catholic Middle Ages; and so the argument ran: Apostacy and heresy are, as criminal offenses against God, far more serious crimes than high treason, murder, or adultery. . . . But, *according to Romans xiii, 11, seq.*, the secular authorities have the right to punish, especially grave crimes, with death; *consequently, 'heretics may be not only excommunicated, but also justly (juste) put to death'* (St. Thomas, II–II, Q; xi, a, 3). . . . The earliest example of the execution of a heretic was the beheading of the ring leader of the Priscillianists by the usurper Maximus at Trier (385). Even St. Augustine, towards the end of his life, favoured State reprisals against the Donatists. . . . Influenced by the Roman code, which was rescued from oblivion, Frederick II introduced the penalty of burning for heretics by imperial law of 1224. The *popes*, especially Gregory IX, *favoured the execution of this imperial law*, in which they saw an effective means for the preservation of the Faith. . . . Unfortunately, neither the secular nor the ecclesiastical authorities drew the slightest distinction between dangerous and harmless heretics, seeing forthwith in every (formal) heresy a '*contumelia Creatoris*,' which the theocratic State *was called upon* to avenge with the pyre." (*CE.* xiv, 766, 768.)

"THE SECULAR ARM"

"Hypocrites! Ye compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves!" *Jesus.* (Matt. xxiii, 15.)

"The barbarous penal forms of the Middle Ages are to be credited, *not to the Church, but to the State*"! (*CE.* xiv, 768.) It is a monstrous

hypocritical perversion of truth to pretend, as the Church ever does, that these inhuman and devastating legal enactments and deeds of fire and blood, which *ad horrendum* we have just read in faint outline from secular and ecclesiastical history, and which brought several "Most Christian" nations to utter ruin, moral and economic, were the voluntary and spontaneous expressions of the social policy of secular rulers, enacted and wrought against their subjects in order to preserve the peace and safety of the State and to regulate the civil and political conduct of their peoples. The Church, by fraud and fear, brought the secular rulers under her ignominious domination, and forced them by her threats, as we have seen proved and admitted, to make and enforce these infernal enactments and destructions. "This is the stale pretense of the Clergy in all countries, after they have *solicited the government* to make penal laws against those they call heretics or schismatics, and *prompted the magistrates* to a vigorous execution, then to lay all the odium on the civil power; for whom they have no excuse to allege, but that such men suffered, not for religion, but for disobedience to the laws." (*Somers Tracts*, vol. xii, p. 534; cited by Buckle, *Hist. of Civilization in England*, i, p. 246.)

But the Church waited not for the secular rulers to obey her murderous behests to "avenge with the pyre" the crime of disbelieving and deriding the Faith, nor did she lose time while watching the execution of her commands of murder by the secular arm. The Church was itself a secular ruler over then vast territories, the stolen "Patrimony of Peter" or States of the Church; and for those territories their Royal-Holinesses set the example of murder and burning of their own heretics. His Holiness Pope Gregory IX (1227–41) was, we are told, "very severe towards heretics, who in those times were universally looked upon as traitors and punished accordingly. . . . When in 1224 Frederick II ordered that heretics in Lombardy should be burnt at the stake, Gregory IX, then Papal Legate, approved and published the imperial law. In 1231 *the Pope enacted a law for Rome* that heretics condemned by an ecclesiastical court should be delivered to the secular power to receive their 'due punishment.' This 'due punishment' was *death by fire* for the obstinate and *imprisonment for life for the penitent*. In pursuance of this law a number were arrested in Rome,

burnt at the stake, and imprisoned." (*CE.* vi, 797.) And it was in Rome, by law and command of His Royal-Holiness Clement VIII, that the defier of the "Triumphant Beast," Giordano Bruno, was burned alive in Rome in 1600.

The hypocritical lie is repeated—and in the same breath belied. "Officially it was *not the Church* that sentenced unrepenting heretics to death, more particularly to the stake . . . Gregory IX . . . admitted the opinion, then prevalent among legists, that *heresy should be punished with death,* seeing that *it was confessedly no less serious an offense than high treason.* . . . [The succeeding popes went from opinions to acts.] In the Bull '*Ad Extirpanda*' (1252) Innocent IV says: 'When those adjudged guilty of heresy have been given up to the civil power by the bishop or his representative, or the Inquisition, the podestà or chief magistrate of the city *shall take them* at once, *and shall,* within five days at the most, *execute the laws made against them.*' Moreover, *he directs* that this Bull and the corresponding regulations of Frederick II [for burning heretics] be entered in every city among the municipal statutes *under pain of excommunication,* which was also visited on those who failed to execute both the papal and the imperial decrees. . . . The passages [of the imperial decrees] which ordered the burning of impenitent heretics *were inserted in the papal decretals.* . . . The aforesaid Bull 'Ad Extirpanda' remained thenceforth a fundamental document of the Inquisition, renewed or reinforced by several popes, Alexander IV (1254–61), Clement IV (1265–68), Nicholas IV (1288–92), Boniface VIII (1294–1303), and others. *The civil authorities, therefore, were enjoined by the popes, under pain of excommunication to execute the legal sentences that condemned impenitent heretics to the stake.* It is to be noted that excommunication itself was no trifle, for, if the person excommunicated did not free himself from excommunication within a year, he was held by the (papal) legislation of that period to be a heretic, and incurred all the penalties that affected heresy." (*CE.* viii, 34.)

Here it may be remarked, that prescription or statute of limitations runs not against the murderer. Thus Holy Church, who has murdered and procured the murder of millions, can never escape the just verdict and fatal sentence for her crimes before the bar of Civilization. Impotent now, senile, but venomous still in intention, she reeks

yet with the blood of her slain; their ghosts, like Banquo's, will never down. They cry yet to Humanity: *Ecrasez l'Infame!*

We have just read from *CE.* the confession that "the theocratic State *was called upon* to *avenge with the pyre*" all forms of heresy—or hate for the Church—as a "*contumelia Creatoris.*" Again it says—again contradicting its false pretense that the State is alone to be "credited" with these pious infamies: "After the Christianized Roman Empire had *developed* into a theocratic (religious) State, it *was compelled*—[by whom but by the Church with its terrorizing threats to the superstitious rulers]—to stamp *crimes against faith* (apostasy, heresy, schism) as offenses against the State. (cf. Cod. Justin., I, 5, *de Haer.*: 'Quod in religionem divinam committitur, in omnium fertur injuriam.') *Catholic and citizen of the State became identical terms. Consequently crimes against faith* were high treason, and as such were punishable with death." (*CE.* xiv, p. 768.) A truer statement of the direful consequences of this enforced prostitution of the "secular arm" of the State to the criminal purposes of the Church in coercing its false and accursed religion upon humanity, cannot be made than this confession, in specious and unctuous words: "The rôle of heresy in history is that of evil generally. Its roots are in corrupted human nature. *It has come* over the Church *as predicted by her Divine Founder; it has rent asunder the bonds of charity in families, provinces, states, and nations; the sword has been drawn and pyres erected both for its defense and its repression; misery and ruin have followed in its track*"! (*CE.* vii, 261.) The confessed accursed record of Christianity!

The utter dependence of the Church for the beginnings and for the persistence of its bloody dominance, upon the extorted favors and support of the prostituted "Secular Arm" of the State to do its dirty work of subjection, is confessed and illustrated by two instances, one with respect to the overthrow of Paganism, the other accounting for the ultimate suppression of the early heretical sects. Of the former, it is "credited" to the Emperor Gratian: "In the same year, 375, he abolished all the privileges of the pagan pontiffs and the grants for the support of the pagan worship. *Deprived of the assistance of the State,* paganism rapidly lost influence. . . . He made apostasy a crime punishable by the State." (*CE.* vi, 729.) With a clerical slur at the "fanciful speculations of the Eastern sects so dear to the Eastern

mind," oblivious of the equally fanciful "Oriental *speculations*" which are the only source of the holy dogmas of Western Christianism, it is cynically recorded: . . . "but, *lacking the support of the temporal power*, they sank—[just as "orthodox" Christianity would have sunk to oblivion]—under the anathema of the guardians of the *depositum fidei*"—holding the sword. (*CE.* vii, 259.)

As elsewhere suggested, it is pertinent to remark, that history would quickly repeat itself in this highly-to-be-desired respect, with the withdrawal of "the support of the temporal power," through the immense and illegal support yet given to the Beggar Church through deadhead tax exemption on its thousands of millions of dollars of ill-gotten, idle and hoarded properties.

"St. Augustine seems to have originated the application of the words 'Compel them to enter in,' to religious persecution. Religious liberty he emphatically cursed: '*Quid est enim pejor, mors animæ quam libertas erroris?*—For which is worse, the death of the soul than the liberty of error?' (*Epistle* clxvi.) Boniface III decreed excommunication of any magistrate who either altered the sentence of the Inquisition, or delayed more than six days in carrying it into execution. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, Innocent III instituted the Inquisition, and issued the first *appeal to princes to employ their power* for the suppression of heresy. In 1209, De Montfort (at Innocent's instigation), began the massacre of the Albigenses. In 1215, the Fourth Council of the Lateran *enjoined all rulers*, 'as they desired to be esteemed faithful, to *swear a public oath* that they would labor earnestly, and *to the full extent of their power, to exterminate from their dominions all those who were branded as heretics by the Church.*' The Council of Avignon, in 1209, enjoined all bishops to *call upon the civil power to exterminate heretics.* The Bull of Innocent III threatened any prince who failed to extirpate heretics from his realm with excommunication, and *with the loss of his realm.*" (Lecky, *History of the Rise and Progress of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. II, chap. iv, *passim.*)

As confessedly "tolerance came in only when faith went out," eternal gratitude and glory are the due meed of RATIONALISM, which has struck the sword and the stake from the armory of Faith, and left it a jaded sycophant begging "tolerance" of and for its bloody self.

England was rather distant from Rome and the English spirit did not yield so debasedly as some others did to the orders and dominion of priestcraft; but so early as Alfred the Great, so vaunted by the Church for his piety and learning, we have this picture of prostitution of State to Church; and the effects on both: "In the joint code of laws published by Alfred and Guthrum, *apostasy was declared a crime*, the payment of Peter's Pence was commanded, and the practice of heathen rites was forbidden. . . . But the clergy, . . . discharging in each district the functions of local state officials, seem never to have quite regained the religious spirit." (*CE.* i, 507.)

Out of scores of instances of legal enactments made by superstitious rulers under the terrors of papal threats, I cite here but one, in the quaint words of a militant philosopher: "Consequent to this claim of the Pope to be the Vicar Generall of Christ in the present Church . . . is the doctrine of the fourth Counsell of Lateran, held under Pope Innocent the third (Chap. 3, *de Hæreticis*), That if a King at the Popes admonition, doe not purge his Kingdom of Hæresies, and being excommunicate for the same, doe not give satisfaction within a year, his Subjects are absolved of the bond of their obedience. Where, by Hæresies are understood all opinions which the Church of Rome hath forbidden to be maintained." (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Pt. iv, ch. 44, p. 333; 1651.) The infallible but presumptuous claim of the Vicars of God may be stated in the terms of the famous Bull of the "Two Swords":

"Under the *control* of the Church are two swords, that is, two powers. . . . Both swords are in the power of the Church, the spiritual and the temporal; the spiritual is wielded *in* the Church by the hand of the clergy; the secular *is to be employed for the Church* by the hand of the civil authority, but *under the direction* of the spiritual power. The one sword must be subordinate to the other; the earthly power must submit to the spiritual authority, as this has precedence of the secular on account of its greatness and sublimity; for the spiritual power has the right to establish and guide the secular power, and also to judge it when it does not act rightly. . . . This authority, although granted to man, and exercised by man, is not a human authority, but rather a Divine one granted to Peter by Divine commission and confirmed in him and his successors. Consequently, whoever opposes this power ordained of God opposes the law of God." (Bull *Unam Sanctam*, Boniface VIII, Nov. 18, 1302; *CE.* xv, 126.)

THE "TRIUMPH" OF CHRISTIANITY

Our review of the Forgery Founded Church having demonstrated the monstrous falsity of every divine premise of this "Bull," the hollow sham of these sonorous braggart phrases is ghastlily apparent. They are priestly lies!

COMPULSORY AND WHOLESALE CONVERSION

"And the Lord said unto his servant, Go into the highway and hedges, and *compel them to come in,* that my house may be filled." *Jesus.* (Luke xiv, 23.)

Disparaging the commands of its Lord to force them in, his Vicarate apologizes: "Instances of compulsory conversions such as *have occurred* at different periods of the Church's history must be ascribed to the *misplaced zeal of autocratic individuals.*" (*CE.* xi, 703.) The facts of history, as cited by *CE.* itself, belie this apologetic clerical passing of the odium for such felonious duress to autocratic individuals uninfluenced by the "moral" constraint of the Church-beneficiary and unswayed by its anathemas and threats of formal excommunication. A criminal who resorts to murder to prevent the escape of the victims who support him, would readily threaten murder to add greatly to the number of his supporting victims. It was St. Augustine himself, greatest pillar and authority of the Church Persecutrix, who first invoked the Christ's fatal fanatic command, "Compel them to come in," as complementary to the bloody edicts of the earlier "Christian" emperors and of his own fatuous fulminations against the "liberty of error," as above noticed. The first temptation to come to Christ was by bribes, as when Constantine offered a gold coin and a clean baptismal robe to all who would undergo that process; and the example of the Emperor in favoring Christianity drew great numbers of servile subjects to the feast of the Lord. We have read the cynical confession: that when governments favor a religious sect by giving its adherents all the offices and honors of the State and excluding all opponents, "the army of civil servants becomes a more powerful body of missionaries than the ordained ministers." When Clovis came to Christ he tolled 3000 of his retainers into the baptismal font with him at one time. Pepin "had been filled with this lofty conception, consequently extraordinary success attended the missionary labours of the Church.

. . . The conversion of the Avars had been attempted by the Bavarian Duke; after their *subjugation*, they were placed under the jurisdiction" of high prelates of the Church. (*CE.* v, 611.) "When the conversion of their prince was publicly known, the (people) of his kingdom are said to have flocked in crowds to receive the Christian faith." (*CE.* i, 669.)

When Charlemagne spent those seven days in Rome with His Holiness, who tricked him into believing that "his imperial dignity was an act of God, made known, *of course*, through the agency of the Vicar of Christ" (*CE.* iii, 615), and they together formed those "many great designs for the glory of God and the exaltation of the Church," due execution of the command of the Christ, "Compel them to come in," was one of the great designs conspired with His Vicar: "True to his own and his father's understanding with the pope, he invariably insisted on baptism as the sign of submission, punishing with appalling barbarity any resistance, as when, in cold blood, he beheaded in one day 4500 persons at Verdun, in A. D. 782. Under such circumstances it is not wonderful that clerical influence extended so fast. Always bearing in mind his engagement with the papacy, that Roman Christianity should be enforced upon Europe wherever his influence could reach, he remorselessly carried into execution the penalty of death that he had awarded to the *crimes* of: 1. refusing baptism; 2. false pretense of baptism; 3. relapse to idolatry; 4. the murder of a bishop or priest; 5. human sacrifice; 6. eating meat in Lent. To the pagan German his sword was a grim, but convincing missionary." (Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, i, 374.) This secular authority is confirmed by this clerical admission; that under the Carlovingian Empire, "*in war conversion went hand in hand with victory;* in peace Charles ruled through bishops. . . . The Teutonic Order began the great conflict which *after more than half a century of bloodshed dealt the death-blow to paganism* in Prussia." (*CE.* iii, 700, 705.) Conversion by force and arms continued through the Ages of Faith and brought entire nations to Christ: "More lasting success followed the attempts, patterned on the Crusades, to carry on *wars of conversion* and *conquest* in those territories of north-eastern Europe peopled by tribes that had *lapsed from the Faith* or that were still heathen; among such pagans were the Obotrites, Pomeranians, Wiltzi, Serbs, Letts, Livonians,

Finns, and Prussians. The preliminary work was done in the twelfth century by missionaries. They were *aided with armed forces* [by several kings and rulers]. From the beginning of the thirteenth century *Crusades* were undertaken against Livonia, Courland, Esthonia, and Prussia. In Lithuania Christianity *did not win* until 1368." (*CE.* v, 612.) In Hungary, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, "the new *religion was spread by the sword.* . . . With these *laws* King St. Stephen brought over almost all his people to the Catholic Faith. . . . He [a later King] took strong measures against those who had fallen away from the Faith." (*CE.* vii, 548–9.)

Thus it was that by war and bloody imposition rather than by washing in the Blood of the Lamb, "vast tribes of savages who had always been idolaters, who were perfectly incapable, from their low state of civilization, of forming any but anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity, or of concentrating their attention steadily on any visible object, and who for the most part were converted, not by individual persuasion, but *by the commands of their chiefs*, embraced Christianity in such multitudes that their habits soon became the dominating habits of the Church. From this time the tendency to idolatry was irresistible. The old images were worshipped under new names." (Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 218.) The brand of conversion was marked by the outfit of missionaries and military auxiliaries who first caught the barbarians; and if the wrong kind got them first, it made all the difference in the world in point of whether the result was the intelligent working of the Holy Ghost or sheer ignorance. The great Bishop "Ulphilas (311–388) taught the Goths the Arian theology; Arian kingdoms arose in Spain, Africa, Italy. The Gepidae, Heruli, Vandals, Alans, and Lombards received a system which they were as little capable of understanding as they were of defending, and the Catholic bishops, the monks, *the sword* of Clovis, the action of the papacy, made an end of it before the eighth century." (*CE.* i, 707.) Arianism was very simple; it held that there was but a One-Person God, and denied the Blessed Trinity of Three-in-One. Thus Arianism was "an attempt to rationalize the Creed by stripping it of *mystery* so far as the relation of Christ to God was concerned" (*Ib.*). But this simple and de-mystified theology, the non-Catholic barbarians were too ignorant to understand; whereas, the other barbarians whose

minds were enlightened by the Holy Ghost at the point of the Catholic sword, were perfectly intelligent to comprehend the Mystery of the Holy Trinity,—which would have stumped Aristotle. The Arians had only to follow the ordinary Multiplication Table—"One times One is One"; whereas the Orthodox had to multiply curiously,—"Three times One is One!" The true formula is—Three times Naught is Nothing!

CONVERSION SKIN DEEP

In truth, however, "these nations were only Christianized upon the surface, their conversion being indicated by little more than their making the sign of the cross." (Draper, *Op. cit.*, i, 365.) True, indeed, it is, as is scores of times confessed: "Paganism had not been renewed in Christ." (*CE.* iii, 700.) "Christians who considered themselves faithful, held in a measure to the worship of the sun. Leo the Great in his day says that it was the custom of many Christians to stand on the steps of the Church of St. Peter and pay homage to the Sun by obeisance and prayers." (*CE.* iv, 297; cf, iii, 724–727.) And generally was it true: "The *pagani* retained the worship of the old gods even after they were all Christianized." (*CE.* vi, 12.) Among the Germans, and it is exactly as with all others, "the acceptance of the Christian name and ideas was at first a purely mechanical one." (*CE.* vi, 485.)

As the result of the superficial veneer, in the early days when persecution occasionally broke out, and offering incense to the statue of Dea Roma or the Emperor was the test of Pagan patriotism, great numbers of laity and even of clergy "flocked at once to the altars of the heathen idols to offer sacrifice." (*CE.* ix, 2.) "The apostates and the timid who had bought a certificate of apostasy, *became so numerous* as to fancy that they could lay down the law to the Church, . . . a state of affairs which gave rise to controversies and deplorable troubles. A bishop, followed by his whole community, was to be seen sacrificing to the gods." (*CE.* i, 191.) At first the Church "imposed perpetual penance and excommunication without hope of pardon" on the backsliders; "however, the great number of *Lapsi* and *Libellatici* . . . led to a relaxation of the rigour of ecclesiastical discipline, leaving the forgiveness of the sin to God alone" (*CE.* i, 624), while their easy return to the decimated fold of Holy Church immensely increased

its sacred revenues and extended its sway. However, "when the Roman Empire became Christian, apostates were punished by deprivation of all civil rights. They could not give evidence in a court of law, and could neither bequeath nor inherit property. To induce anyone to apostatize was an offense punishable with death, under the Theodosian Code, XVI, 7, De Apostasis." (*CE.* i, 625.)

Thus by centuries of fraud, fear and force was the "house of God" filled from the highways and the hedges, the forests and the wattle villages, with Pagans "nominally converted to Christianity." Heathen superstitions veneered with the Pagan superstitions called Christianity, blended together for the further bestialization of the Faithful of Holy Church of the Christ, and the pall of the Dark Ages of Faith settled down over benighted, Church-ruled Christendom,—that "civilization thoroughly saturated with Christianity," and "fully absorbed in the supernatural." Two holy characteristics of the Age of Faith, the grovelling fear of guilt and devout concern for the devil, are thus commented: "Superstition is abject and crouching, it is full of thoughts of guilt; it distrusts God and dreads the power of evil" (*CE.* i, 555); and, with the pious Christians, "as among all savages, disease and death were commonly ascribed to evil spirits or witchcraft." (*CE.* xiv, 26.) So through the Ages of Faith!

Holy Church and Divine Christanity being now in full power and possession over mind and body of Christendom, it had free scope to bring forth fruits unto perfection of "Christian Civilization."

THE "FRUITS" OF CHRISTIANITY

"Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." *Jesus.*

What Christianity did for [to] Civilization

The first effects of a new, and particularly an official State Religion, are upon mind and morals,—the state of culture or prevailing civilizing conditions; essentially, on the system of moral and intellectual education of the peoples subject to it. This is recognized by the Church: "As in many other respects, so for the work of education, the advent of Christianity is the most important epoch in the history of mankind." (*CE.* v, 299.) Alas, this is disastrously true, as the Church's own history demonstrates. Jesus Christ, says *CE.*, was the "Perfect

Teacher"; "to His Apostles He gave the command, 'Going, therefore, teach ye all nations.' These words are the charter of the Christian Church as a teaching institution" (*ib.*). Here it got its Divine License to teach, and it taught.

How effective was the Church as the Divinely instituted Pedagogue of Christendom, can be justly appreciated only through a knowledge of what kind of education, moral and mental, previously and at the time existed, and what educational system the Church inherited from the "heathens" when it assumed its sacred monopoly of teaching, and by a comparison between the pre-Christian and the Christian systems and results. By what the Church destroyed of existing systems, and by what is produced through its own,—by these fruits of its zeal for Christian teaching must the success of its execution of its Divine Commission be known and judged.

Christianity arose and finally prevailed in the Græco-Roman world, and there is exercised its Divine License as exclusive teacher of faith and morals and of secular education. Before the advent of Christianity, the nations of the Pagan Empire were—we are told—"such as sit in darkness and the shadow of death"; the "Perfect Teacher" came "to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke, i, 79; cf. Matt. iv, 16). A dismal picture is thus presented, and for centuries was touched up with the darkest colors by Christian preachments, of the moral depravity if not intellectual benightedness of the poor heathens before the "Light of the World" was shed upon them from the Cross on Calvary. The Greeks and Romans knew naught of Moses and the Prophets, had never conned the Ten Commandments, and had never murdered any one "who hearkeneth not unto the priest," as commanded in Deut. xvii, 12. Deplorable indeed must have been their state before the Divine Teacher undertook their enlightenment. The picture of their actual moral and intellectual plight we will scan as drawn by Christian scholars. Here is faintly a sketch of—

"THE GLORY THAT WAS GREECE"

"The education of the Greeks exhibits a progressive development. . . . The ideal of Athenian education was the completely developed man. Beauty of mind and body, the cultivation of every inborn faculty and energy, har-

mony between thought and life, decorum, temperance, and regularity—such were the results aimed at in the home and in the school, in social intercourse, and in civic relations. 'We are lovers of the beautiful,' said Pericles, 'yet simple in our tastes,' and we cultivate the mind without loss of manliness' (Thucydides, II, 40). . . .

"The Greeks indeed laid stress on courage, temperance, and obedience to law; and if their theoretical disquisitions —[or those of the Christians, for that matter]—could be taken as fair accounts of their actual practice, it would be difficult to find, among the products of human thinking, *a more exalted ideal.* The essential weakness of their moral education was the failure to provide any adequate sanction—[*e. g.,* the fear of Hell and damnation]—for the principles they formulated and the counsels they gave their youth. . . . The practice of religion, whether in public services or in household worship, exercised but little influence upon the formation of character. . . . As to the future life, the Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul; but this belief had little or no practical significance—[as to them, virtue was its own reward]. . . .

"Thus the motive for virtuous action was found, *not in respect for Divine law nor in the hope of eternal reward,* but simply in the desire to temper in due proportion the elements of human nature. Virtue is not self-possession for the sake of duty, but, as Plato says, 'a kind of health and good habit of the soul,' while vice is 'a disease and deformity and sickness of it.' The just man 'will so regulate his own character as to be *on good terms with himself,* and to set those three principles (reason, passion, and desire) in tune together, as if they were verily three chords of a harmony, a higher, a lower, and a middle, and whatever may lie between these; and after he has bound all three together and reduced the many elements of his nature to a real unity as a temperate and duly harmonized man, he will then at length proceed to do whatever he has to do' (Republic, IV, 443). This conception of virtue as a self-balancing was closely bound up with that idea of personal worth which has already been mentioned as the central element in Greek life and education. . . . The aim of education, therefore, is to *develop knowledge of the GOOD.*" (*CE.* v, 296–7.)

Saving their depraved want of respect for "Divine law"—(proclaimed by priests), and their woful neglect to provide "adequate sanction"—of "bribe of Heaven and threat of Hell" (priest-devised), for inducement to their Nature-harmonized character, the godless Greeks did fairly well in "developing the knowledge of the good" and attaining the most "exalted ideal"—outside of Jewish-Christian reve-

lation—to be found among mankind, of personal and civic virtue, due alone to their high "idea of personal worth," rather than to the revealed concept of humanity pre-damned, "conceived in sin and born in iniquity," crawling through this Vale of Tears as "vile worms of the dust," of Christian self-confession. But then, God in his inscrutable Wisdom had withheld his precious revelation of Total Depravity from the Greeks,—knowing, probably, that they did not need it, and had bestowed it only on the obscure tribe of barbarian polygamous Hebrews, who eminently fitted the revelation. So it was not the Greeks' fault that they were no worse off, without the revelation, than were the Jews with it. We will come to the Christians anon.

Though, thus, the "Sun of Righteousness" did not illumine the revelationless skies of Greek Culture, the most splendrous stars of intellect and soul which ever—(before the Star of Bethlehem arose)—shone down the vistas of Time, blazed in its zenith. The name of every star in that Pagan Greek galaxy is known to every intelligent person throughout Christendom today; the light from these or those of them illuminates every page and every phase of Art, Literature and Science known today to the inestimable glory of man and boon of humanity. The living germ of some, the unsurpassed perfection of others, is the product of the intellect and the soul of the poor Pagan Greeks who had no Divine Revelation and were bereft of the priceless "benefit of Clergy" as a teaching institution.

Let us gaze for a moment as through the telescope of Time and scan the brilliant luminaries of the heavens of Pagan Greek genius, undimmed then by the Light of the Cross. Beginning with those who were about contemporary in their appearance with post-exilic Hebrew revelation, say about 600 B. C., we will name only those immortally known to every highschool student, skipping among the galaxies down to the time, about 400 A. D., when they were for a thousand years eclipsed by the Light of the Cross shining in the "Dark Ages" of Christian Faith.

The Pagan Greeks, unfamiliar with the Hebrew revelation of the Divine Right of Kings—(anointed by priests)—to rule mankind, invented Democracy, the right of the people to rule themselves,—a heresy recognized in the Declaration as a self-evident proposition, that all just powers of government are derived from the consent of the

governed. News about Moses and his Divine laws not having penetrated into Pagan Greece, a scheme of purely human codes for human conduct was devised by the heathen Lawgivers, Draco, Solon, Lycurgus. The revealed Mosaic History of the Hebrews not being available as a model, the poor Pagan Greeks had to make shift with Herodotus, "Father of History," Thucydides, Xenophon, Strabo, Plutarch, Pausanius, Polybius, Claudius Ptolemy, Dion Cassius. The God-drafted plans of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and of Solomon's Temple not being at hand to imitate, uninspired Greeks planned and built the Parthenon, the Erechtheum, the Prophylæa, the Temple of Diana of Ephesus, the Temple of Apollo at Corinth, the Serapion and the Museum, "Home of all the Muses," at Alexandria. The summit of human art in sculpture was reached in Pagan Greece, the Apollo Belvidere, the Venus de Milo, the Wingèd Victory, the Laocoön, the friezes of the Parthenon; consummate masters of the "Old Masters" were the Pagans Phidias, Praxiteles, Callimachus, Scopas, Polyclitus, with the chisel; Apelles, Zeuxis, Polygnotus, Parrhasius, Pausias, with the brush. Statesmen and military leaders unknown to Hebrew History, yet whose names are immortal, led the Pagan Greeks to greatness and glory: Themistocles, Pericles, Aristides the Just, Lycurgus, Miltiades, Leonidas, Alexander the Great, who conquered the God-led Jews. Poor heathen orators, who never heard Jehovah speak from Sinai, nor the Christ on the Mount,—their supreme eloquence has echoed down the ages: Demosthenes, Democrates, Æschines, Lysias, Isocrates.

Literature and the Theatre were born in Pagan Greece; the "Classics" of Pagan thought and dramatic majesty came from the minds and pens of uninspired heathen who knew no line of the inspired "Law and Prophets" of the Hebrews, made semi-intelligible and sonorous only by the very free treatment of skilled translators into Elizabethan English; they are the immortal and inimitable standards of literary form, style, culture, in every university, high school, playhouse, and cultured home in Christendom today. For poetry: Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Anacreon, Theocritus, the burning Sappho; for drama: Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, besides the historians and orators named, the delightful old Æsop, the philosophers and scholars yet to name. The drama, tragedy, comedy, the

chorus, melodrama; the epic, the ode, the lyric, the elegy, poetic form and measure, the very words for all these things, pure Pagan Greek. Philosophy—the love of Wisdom—the highest reach of the uninspired human intellect into the mysteries, not of faith and godliness, but of mind and soul, in search of the first principles of being,—the "*ousia* of the *on*," and for the Supreme Good, the noblest rules of human conduct and happiness: Thales, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Xenophanes, Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Socrates, Plato of the Academy, Aristotle of the Lyceum, Epicurus, Pythagoras, Zeno the Stoic, Antisthenes the Cynic, whose lofty moral systems have exalted mankind ever since, and whose words and works have dominated civilization and made their names immortal, though none of them knew of Moses, the Christ, or the Apostles,—although Heraclitus invented the "Logos" which St. John worked up into the creative "Word of God" for Christian consumption.

Science, supremest handmaid of civilization, the true "God of this world," its splendid dawn was in Pagan Greece, unshackled by Genesis and Divine Mosaic revelation. Here Greek thought, undeterred by priestly ban and unafrighted by Popish Inquisition, sought to fathom the secrets of Creation and of Nature, to explain the Riddle of the Universe, to make the forces of Nature the obedient servitors of Man. Astronomy was born with Thales [640–546 B. C.], the first of the Seven Sages of Greece. Utterly ignorant of the Divine handiwork of the Six Days, and of universal creation out of universal Nothing, and not having travelled enough to verify the four corners of the flat earth, guarded by the Four Angels of the Corners, guardians of the Four Winds, he sought for the First Principle, the *arché*, of Creation, attributing all matter to changes in atoms; not knowing the revelation that the sun was set in a solid "firmament" arched over the flat earth, and somehow trundled across it daily to light Adam and his progeny, and had been stopped still for Joshua and turned backward ten degrees for Hezekiah, but fancying that it was governed by fixed natural law, by unaided power of mind he calculated and predicted the eclipse of 565 B. C., and discovered the Solstices and Equinoxes; he calculated so nearly the solar revolutions, that he corrected the calendar and divided the year into 365 days, which it still has; he taught the Egyptians to measure the height of the Pyramids by triangulation from the shadow

of a rod he set up near them, and invented several of the theorems adopted by Euclid. Anaximander (610–546 B. C.), like his master ignorant of Mosaic astronomy, discovered and taught the obliquity of the ecliptic, due to the erratic behavior of the equator of the earth in swinging round the sun; he approximated the sizes and distances of the planets—not all set on the same solid plane; he discovered the phases of the moon, and constructed the first astronomical globes; he was the first to discard oral teaching, and commit the principles of natural science to writing.

Pythagoras of Samos (c. 584 B. C.), was a universal genius; he coined the word "philosopher," according to Cicero; made discoveries in music, which he conceived as a science based on mathematical principles, and fancied the "music of the spheres." As he hadn't read Genesis, he defiantly (through such ignorance) proclaimed that the earth was a globe revolving around the sun or central fire, and had inhabitable Antipodes,—heathen notions which got several Christian gentlemen into more or less trouble some 2000 years later when they revived the idea. He speculated on eclipses as natural phenomena rather than special dispensations of Providence; he disputed Moses on Geology by claiming that the earth-surface hadn't always been just so, but that the sea had once been land, the land sea; that islands had once formed parts of continents; that mountains were forever being washed down by rivers and new mountains thus formed; that volcanoes were outlets for subterranean fires, rather than public entrances into Hell; that fossils were the buried remains of ancient plants and animals turned into stone, rather than theological proofs of Noah's Flood embedded for confutation of Infidels in the Rock of Faith.

Demòcritus (c. 460 B. C.), the "Laughing Philosopher," the most learned thinker of his day and renowned for all the moral virtues; he wrote some 72 books on physics, mathematics, ethics, grammar; totally unlearned in Bible science, he scouted the idea of Design in Nature, declaring it lapped in universal law; he upheld belief in secondary or physical causes, but not in a primary immaterial First Cause, declaring that by natural law could all the phenomena of the universe be accounted for; that there was no need of, no room for, supernatural interference or Divine Providence. He left immortal mark on the world of knowledge by his elaborated theory of atoms, or consti-

tuents of matter too small to be cut or divided; boldly and logically he applied this theory to the gods themselves, holding that they were mere aggregates of material atoms—(seemingly verified by the fact of eating the body of deity in wafers)—only mightier and more powerful than men,—and seemingly, to walk and talk, hate and kill, there must be something material about them. Modern chemistry, the most universal and useful of the sciences, is founded on modifications of the atomic theory of Democritus.

Hippocrates (c. 460–c. 377 B. C.) is known as the "Father of Medicine." He was the first physician to differentiate diseases, and to ascribe them to different causes, on the basis of accurate observation and common sense. His great axiom was: "To know is one thing; merely to believe one knows is another. To know is science, but merely to believe one knows is ignorance." In his days all sickness and ailments were considered as inflicted directly by the gods; the later revelation that it was all due to devils in the inner works of man was not then known. But the result was the same: all curing was the monopoly of the priests, the friends and favorites of the gods and possessors of all godly lore. As the only physicians, the priests had great revenues and a fine livelihood from the offerings made by patients who flocked for relief to the temples of Æsculapius, which filled the ancient world. Hippocrates sought to separate medicine from religion, thus incurring the venomous attacks of the priests and pious quacks. Never having heard of "fig leaf poultices," or spittle to oust devils, "He laid down certain principles of science upon which modern medicine is built: 1. There is no authority except facts; 2. Facts are obtained by accurate observation; 3. Deductions are to be made only from facts." Not knowing the Christian art of casting out devils, the heathen "Hippocrates introduced a new system of treatment; he began by making a careful study of the patient's body, and having diagnosed the complaint, set about curing it by giving directions to the sufferer as to his diet and the routine of his daily life, leaving Nature largely to heal herself." As about ninety percent of all ills are such as would heal themselves if let alone, or if treated with simple hygienic means, and many cures are greatly aided by "faith" even in Pagan gods, the element of the miraculous is greatly discounted in the successes of the priests of Æsculapius, and possibly in those of Loreto and Lourdes.

He had no real successor until Vesalius, the first real surgeon; the Inquisition nearly got him because his anatomical researches disclosed that man had the same number of ribs as woman, not one less to represent that taken for Eve; and he disproved the Church's sacred science of the "Resurrection Bone."

Aristotle (384–322 B. C.) the Stagarite, friend and tutor of Alexander the Great, besides being one of the greatest philosophers, was the foremost man of science of his day, and in his encyclopedic works laid the foundation of Natural science or physics, Natural History, meteorology or the phenomena of the heavens, animal anatomy, to all which he applied the processes of closest research and experiment and the principles of inductive reasoning. By reason of the limitations of his process, and over-dogmatism rather than experiment in some lines, he made many curious mistakes, which ham-strung the human mind for ages. One was the assertion that two objects of different weight, dropped from the same height to the earth, would strike the earth at different intervals of time, the heavier first; when Galileo denied this theory and offered to disprove it by experiment, the pious Christians of Pisa scouted and scorned him; when he ascended the Leaning Tower and dropped two iron balls, one of one pound weight, the other of one hundred, and both struck the ground at the same instant, they refused to accept the demonstration, and drove him out of the city; so strong was the hold of even the errors of Pagan Aristotle on Christian credulity.

Aristotle had not read the cosmic revelations of Moses, and was ignorant of the true history of Creation as revealed through him. He discovered sea shells and the fossil remains of marine animals on the tops of the mountains of Greece, and embedded far down from the surface in the sides of the mountain gorges; he noted that the rocks lay in great layers or strata one above another, with different kinds of fossils in the several strata. In his Pagan imagination Aristotle commented on this: that if seashells were on the tops of mountains far from the sea, why, to get there the tops of the mountains must once have been in the bottom of the sea, the rocks formed under the sea, and the shells and other animal remains embedded in them must once have lived and died in the sea and there have been deposited in the mud of the bottom before it hardened into rock. If Aristotle had climbed Pike's

Peak he would have found great beds of ocean coral in the rocks there; sea shell-fish and sponges—(which Aristotle himself first discovered to be animals)—in the rocky walls of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

Theophrastus (c. 373–287 B. C.), disciple and successor of Aristotle as head of the Peripatetic School of philosophy; his chief renown was as the first of the botanists, on which study he left some sixteen books; for 1800 years after his death the science lay dormant; not a single new discovery in that subject was made until after the close of the millennium of the Christian Ages of Faith.

Aristarchus (c. 220–143 B. C.) was a celebrated astronomer of the new school at Alexandria. From his predecessors he knew that the earth revolved around the sun, and how the plane of the ecliptic was designed; he calculated the inclination of earth's axis to the pole as the angle of 23½ degrees, and thus verified the obliquity of the ecliptic, and explained the succession of the seasons. Aristarchus had not read Moses on the solid firmament and flat earth; he clearly maintained that day and night were due to the spinning of the earth on its own axis every twenty-four hours; his only extant work is "On the Sizes and Distances of the Sun and Moon," wherein by rigorous and elegant geometry and reasoning he reached results inaccurate only because of the imperfect state of knowledge in his time. By exquisite calculations he added 1/1623 of a day to Callipsus' estimate of 365½ days for the length of the solar year; and is said to have invented a hemispherical sundial.

Hipparchus (c. 150 B. C.) made the first catalogue of stars, to the number of over 1,000; but his master achievement was the discovery and calculation of the "precession of the equinoxes" about 130 B. C. Without telescope or instruments, and with no Mosaic Manual on Astronomy to muddle his thought, by the powers of mathematical reasoning from observation he detected the complex movements of the earth, first in rapid rotation on its own axis, and a much slower circular and irregular movement around the region of the poles, which causes the equator to cut the plane of the ecliptic at a slightly different point each year; this he estimated at not more than fifty seconds of a degree each year, and that the forward revolution in "pre-

cession" was completed in about 26,000 years. Such are the powers of the human mind untrammeled by revelation.

Archimedes (287–212 B. C.), one of the most distinguished men of science who ever lived. He discovered the law of specific gravity, in connection with the fraudulent alloys put into Hiero's crown; so excited was he when the thought struck him that, crying "Eureka" he jumped from his bath and ran home naked to proclaim the discovery. He discovered the laws governing the lever, and the principles of the pulley, and the famous endless water-screw used to this day in Egypt to raise water from the Nile for irrigation; he was the first to determine the ratio of the diameter to the circumference of a circle, calculating "πi" to be smaller than 3–1/7 and greater than 3–10/71, which is pretty close for a heathen not having the "Book of Numbers" before him. He made other discoveries and inventions too numerous to relate; he disregarded his mechanical contrivances as beneath the dignity of pure science.

Euclid (c. 300 B. C.) is too well known for his "Principles of Geometry" to need more than mention. Erastosthenes (c. 276–194 B. C.) was the Librarian of the great Library of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, at Alexandria, containing some 700,000 volumes. He invented the imaginary lines, parallels of longitude and latitude, which adorn all our globes and maps to this day. Not knowing the revelation that the earth is flat, he measured its circumference. Noticing that a pillar set up at Alexandria cast a certain shadow at noon on the summer solstice, while a similar pillar at Syene cast no shadow at that time, and was thus on the tropic; he measured the distance between the two places, as 5,000 stadia, about 574 miles; described a circle with a radius equal to the height of the pillar at Alexandria, found the length of the small arc formed on it by the shadow, which was 1/50 of the circle, and represented the arc of the earth's circle between Alexandria and Syene; multiplying the distance by 50 he obtained 28,700 miles as the circumference of the earth; a figure excessive due to mismeasurement, but a magnificent intellectual accomplishment. Erastosthenes was also the founder of scientific chronology, calculating the dates of the chief political and literary events back to the supposed time of the fall of Troy; a date quite as uncertain as that of the later birth of

Jesus Christ from which the monk Dennis the Little essayed to fix the subsequent chronology of Christian history.

Hero of Alexandria (c. 130 B. C.) discovered the principle of the working-power of steam and devised the first steam-engines. In his *Pneumatica* he describes the æolipyle, which may be called a primitive steam reaction turbine; he also mentions another device which may be described as the prototype of the pressure engine. (*Encyc. Brit.* xxi, 351–2.)

Strabo (c. 63 B. C.–19 A. D.), the most famous early geographer and a noted historian; he left a Geography of the world, as then known, in seventeen books, and made a map of the world; travelled over much of it, and described what he saw. From a comparison of the shape of Vesuvius, not then a "burning mountain," with the active Ætna, he forecast that it might some day become active, as it did in 79 A. D. to the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum, described by the Roman philosopher and natural historian, Pliny, who overlooked the Star of Bethlehem, and the earthquake and eclipse of Calvary. Strabo was ignorant of the cosmogony of Moses and the Flood of Noah; so he declared that the fossil shells which he discovered in rocks far inland from the sea proved that those rocks had been formed under the sea by silt brought down by rivers, in which living shell animals had become embedded. If Moses had revealed this interesting fact, much human persecution and suffering would have been avoided.

The principles of Evolution were discovered and taught by most of the ancient Greek philosophers above named and many others, all of whom were profoundly ignorant of the cosmogony of Genesis, and who "endeavored to substitute a natural explanation of the cosmos for the old myths." Anaximander (588–524 B. C.), though he had not read Genesis, anticipated to the very word "slime" used in the True Bible as the material of animal and human creation; "he introduced the idea of primordial terrestrial slime, a mixture of earth and water, from which, under the influence of the sun's heat, plants, animals, and human beings were directly produced." Empedocles of Agrigentum (495–435 B. C.) "may justly be called the father of the evolution idea. . . . All organisms arose through the fortuitous play of the two great forces of Nature upon the four elements." Anaxagoras (500–428) "was the first to trace the origin of animals and plants

to pre-existing germs in the air and ether." Aristotle (384–322 B. C.), the first great naturalist, shows "in his four essays upon the parts, locomotion, generation, and vital principles of animals, that he fully understood adaptation in its modern sense; . . . he rightly conceived of life as the function of the organism, not as a separate principle; . . . he develops the idea of purposive progresses in the development of bodily parts and functions." The doctrine is very substantially developed by the Roman Lucretius, 99–55 B. C. (H. F. Osborn, *From the Greeks to Darwin*, pp. 50, *et seq.*)

The vital germs of virtually every modern science had thus their origin and some notable development in the fertile minds of the Greek thinkers and in their great schools of thought, in the centuries which preceded the Advent of the "Perfect Teacher" and his divinely instituted successors in schoolcraft. If these profound researches into Nature had been included in the Curriculum of the Church, rather than fire and sword employed to extirpate them and all who ventured to pursue them, Holy Church would not have had the "Dark Ages of Faith" to record and apologize for. To what perfection of Civilization and Knowledge might Humanity have arrived in these 2000 years wasted on the Supernatural, and the "Sacred Science of Christianity"!

THE POWER THAT WAS ROME

The Greeks with their brilliant culture and educational system lay for the most part remote from the Holy See of God's Teacher-Church at Rome; so it may be that the environment of the Teacher was really in a region which lay in darkness and the shadow of death, and thus its divine efforts were thwarted and rendered desultory. Thus it becomes important to know the degree of intellectual darkness and incapacity which whelmed the Empire of the West. The tale may best be told in the words of its Inspired Tutor.

"In striking contrast with the Greek character, that of the Romans was practical, utilitarian, grave, austere. Their religion was serious, and it permeated their whole life, hallowing all its relations. The family, especially, was far more sacred than in Sparta or Athens, and the position of woman as wife and mother more exalted and influential. . . .

"The ideal at which the Roman aimed was neither harmony nor happiness, but the performance of duty and the maintenance of his rights. Yet this ideal was to be realized through service to the State. Deep as was the family feeling, it was always subordinate to devotion to the public weal. 'Parents are dear,' said Cicero, 'and children and kindred, but all loves are bound up in the love of our common country' (De Officiis, I, 17). . . .

"Thus *the moral element predominated,* and virtues of a practical sort were inculcated: first of all *pietas,* obedience to parents and to the gods; then prudence, fair dealing, courage, reverence, firmness, and earnestness. These qualities were to be developed, not by abstract or philosophical reasoning, but through *the imitation of worthy models* and, as far as possible of living concrete examples. *'Vitae discimus,* We learn for life,' said Seneca; and this sentence sums up the whole purpose of Roman education—[in contrast to "We learn for heaven," as we shall see the Christian Ideal of education].

"In the course of time, elementary schools (*ludi*) were opened, but they were conducted by private teachers and were supplementary to the home instruction. About the middle of the third century B. C. foreign influences began to make themselves felt. The works of the Greeks were translated into Latin, Greek teachers were introduced, and schools established in which the educational characteristics of the Greeks reappeared. Under the direction of the *literatus* and the *grammaticus* education took on a literary character, while in the school of the *rhetor* the art of oratory was carefully cultivated." (*CE.* v, 298; see p. 358–9.)

PAGAN CULTURAL RESULTS

"Pagan education, as a whole, with its ideals, successes, and failures, has a profound significance. It was the *product of the highest human wisdom,* speculative and practical, *that the world has known*—[thus confessedly, as the highest, higher than the Christian]. It pursued in turn the ideals that appeal most strongly to the human mind. It engaged the thought of the greatest philosophers and the action of the wisest legislators. Art, science, and literature were placed at its service, and the mighty influence of the State was exerted in its behalf. In itself, therefore, and in its results, it shows *how much* and how little *human reason can accomplish* when it seeks no guidance higher than itself and strives for no purposes other than those which find, or might find, *their realization in the present phase of existence.*" (*CE.* v, 298.)

The splendors of the intellect and culture of Pagan Greece, its whole harmonious system of education, mental, moral and physical, which were the glory that was Greece, were transported thus to Rome

and kindled anew there the torch of Reason which illumined and made splendid the power that was Rome. With clerical disparagement that all this intellectual and moral grandeur was accomplished by human reason alone with "no guidance higher than itself," that is, without the heaven-endowed tutorship of priestcraft, *CE.* yet confesses, that "Pagan education . . . was the product of the highest human wisdom . . . that the world has ever known," pursuing "the ideals that appeal most strongly to the human mind." It was in literature and in law, in history, in government, and in the practical arts and sciences, rather than in pure science, that the Roman genius rose to its highest reaches. The undimmed lustre of the Roman mind yet casts its splendors over the world of thought; Roman law, "the action of the wisest legislators," yet governs the actions of men and nations throughout the civilized world. A few illustrious names of universal renown must suffice to put into high relief the culture of Rome from the dawn of the Christian era till the pall of the Christian Ages of Faith fell over the Roman world. Augustus Cæsar (not to mention Julius), Cicero, Cato, Seneca, the Plinys, Tacitus, Livy, Horace, Vergil, Lucretius, the Scipios, Gaius, Paulus, Papinian, Tribonius, Antoninius Pius, Marcus Aurelius; the roster may be mightily extended and every glorious name be known to every schoolboy.

Thus was the Pagan Roman world intellectually and morally illumined when there befell—

THE CHRISTIAN AGE OF FAITH

under the tutelage of the vicars of the Perfect Teacher. The story again may be told by the accredited apologists who thus explain "The Aim of Christian Education," in response to the Divine Command. All education for practical objects of this life, for all "purposes which might find their realization in the present phase of existence," was piously and disdainfully rejected. For over a millennium, as will be soon admitted, Christian "education" was virtually limited to candidates for the priesthood and to the vain mummeries of monks; with few and straggling exceptions no one but a churchman was taught a word: the simple proof is, that scarce one person in a thousand of the population of Christendom except priests, could read or write his

name. The "education" of the Clergy will be known by its fruits, of which we shall have some tastes. Thus *CE.* discloses

"THE AIM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION"

"To these Apostles He gave the command, 'Going therefore, teach ye all nations' (Matt. xxviii, 19)—[a forged Mandate, as we have seen]. These [forged] words are the charter of the Christian Church as a teaching institution. While they refer directly to the doctrine of salvation, and therefore to the imparting of religious truth, they nevertheless, or rather by the very nature of that truth and its consequences for life, carry with them the obligation of *insisting on certain characteristics* which have a decisive bearing on *all* educational problems (p. 299–300). . . .

"*The Educational Work of the Church.* Apart from the preaching of the Apostles, the earliest form of Christian instruction was that given to the catechumens in preparation for baptism. Its object was twofold: to impart a knowledge of Christian truth, and to train the candidate in the practice of religion. . . . Until the third century this mode of instruction was an important adjunct to the Apostolate; but in the fifth and sixth centuries it was gradually replaced by private instruction of the *converts,* and by the training given in other schools to those who had been *baptized* in infancy. The catechumenal schools, however, gave expression to *the spirit which was to animate all subsequent Christian education:* they were open to every one who *accepted the Faith,* and they united religious instruction with moral discipline. The 'catechetical' schools, also under the bishop's supervision, *prepared young clerics for the priesthood.* The courses of study included philosophy and theology, and naturally took on an apologetic character *in defense of Christian truth against the attacks of pagan learning.* . . .

"Philosophy and literature were factors which had to be counted with as well as *the educational system,* which *was still largely under pagan control.* . . . *Fear of the corrupting influence of pagan literature had more and more alienated Christians from such studies.* . . .

"[In the Middle Ages] education was *provided for the clergy* in the cathedral schools under the direct control of the bishop and for the laity in parochial schools to which all had access—[but few availed thereof]. In the curriculum *religion held the first place;* other subjects were *few and elementary,* comprising at best the *trivium* and the *quadrivium.* . . . [I cannot forbear to add this]—The history of education records no greater undertaking; for the task was not that of improving or perfecting, [the brilliant system of pagan education], but of creating [the dull schools of religious instruction]; and had not the Church gone vigorously about her business, *modern civilization would have been retarded for centuries* [!]

"The monasteries were the sole schools for teaching; they offered the only professional training; they were the only universities of research; they alone served as publishing houses for the multiplication of books; they were the only libraries for the preservation of learning; they produced the only scholars; they were the sole educational institutions of this period. . . .

"Two other movements form the climax of the Church's activity during the Middle Ages. The development of Scholasticism meant the revival of Greek philosophy, and in particular that of Aristotle; but it also meant that *philosophy was now to serve the cause of Christian* truth. . . . Having used the subtleties of Greek thought to sharpen the student's mind, the Church thereupon presented to him *her dogmas without the least fear of contradiction.* . . .

"The same synthetic spirit took concrete form in the universities. . . . In university teaching all the then known branches of science were represented. . . . The university was thus, in the educational sphere, the highest expression of that *completeness* which had all along characterized the teaching of the Church." (*CE.* v, 299–303, *passim.*)

All these "universities were devoted for the most part to the development of theology." (*CE.* vii, 368; i, 264.) The "greatest" of these Christian universities was that of Paris, which originated about 1211; "legends of foundation of universities by Alfred, Charlemagne, and Theodosius II, are myths. The students were not boys, but mature men, *many clergy.* . . . Barbarous Latin of the universities and the wretched translations of Aristotle used in commentaries and lectures: the Scholastic method of teaching with its endless hair-splitting and disputations; much time was spent in gaining very little knowledge or hardly any value," were the charges made by the new school of Humanists, headed by Erasmus, "Prince of Humanists," which destroyed the old Christian ideals of education. (*CE.* xv, 194.)

The wonderful Middle Ages universities, so scorned by the Humanists of the Renaissance, and so fondly cherished by the Church, are not to be confounded in thought with such modernistic institutions as Oxford, Cambridge, Columbia or Harvard—(which all started on a purely "Christian" standard). A revealing pen-sketch of them all, based on that of Paris, is drawn by Prof. James Harvey Robinson: "There were no university buildings, and in Paris the lectures were given in the Latin Quarter, in Straw Street, so called from the straw strewn on the floors of the hired rooms where the lecturer explained the text-book [a handwritten manuscript], with the students squatting

on the floor before him. There were no laboratories, for there was no experimentation. All that was required was a copy of the text-book. This the lecturer explained sentence by sentence, and the students listened and sometimes took notes.

"The most striking peculiarity of the instruction of the medieval university was the supreme deference paid to Aristotle. . . . Aristotle was, of course, a pagan. He was uncertain whether the soul existed after death; he had never heard of the Bible and knew nothing of the salvation of man through Christ. One would suppose that he would have been rejected with horror by the ardent Christian believers of the Middle Ages. But the teachers of the thirteenth century were fascinated by his logic and astonished at his learning. . . . He was called 'The Philosopher'; and so fully were scholars convinced that it had pleased God to permit Aristotle to say the last word upon each and every branch of knowledge that they humbly accepted him, along with the Bible, the Church Fathers, and the canon and Roman law, as one of the unquestionable authorities which together formed a complete and final guide for humanity in conduct and in every branch of science. . . . No attention was given to the great subject of history in the medieval universities, nor was Greek taught." (Robinson, *The Ordeal of Civilization*, pp. 207–208.)

The school of Erasmus and the other great Humanists who preceded and followed him brought the Renaissance to its fullness of glory in emancipating the mind from the fetters of the Dark Ages of Faith, and destroyed the rotten fruits of a millennium of "Christian education." Thereupon, says *CE.*, painfully confessing the truth, with reservations, "once the schools were secularized, they fell rapidly under influences which *transformed ideals, systems and methods.* Philosophy *detached from theology*, formulated new theories of life and its values, that moved, at first slowly and then more rapidly, away from the positive teachings of Christianity. Science in turn cast off its allegiance to philosophy and finally proclaimed itself the only sort of knowledge worth seeking. . . .

"During three centuries past, the main endeavor *outside the Catholic Church* has been to establish education on a purely naturalistic basis, whether this be æsthetic culture or scientific knowledge, individual perfection or social service. . . . The Catholic Church has been

obliged to carry on . . . the struggle in behalf of those truths on which Christianity is founded; and *her educational* work during the modern period may be described in general terms as *the steadfast maintenance of the union between the natural and the supernatural.* . . . It is specially the parochial school that has served in recent times as an essential factor in the work of religion. . . . Sound moral instruction is impossible apart from religious education. . . . Catholic parents are bound in conscience to provide for the education of their children, either at home or in schools *of the right sort.*" (*CE.* v, 295–304, *passim.*) "*Parochial schools . . . aimed at fostering vocations to the priesthood.*" (*CE.* xiii, 555.)

The high Christian educational ideal of fettering Reason with Faith, and the underlying objective of all Church teaching, is again strongly insisted upon by our spokesman for Christian education:

"The Christian Church, by virtue of her Divine charter, 'Going, teach ye all nations,' is essentially a teaching organization. . . . Truths which are not of their nature spiritual, truths of science, or history, matters of culture, in a word, profane learning—these *do not belong* intrinsically to the progamme of the Church's teaching. Nevertheless, they enter into her work by force of circumstances, when, namely, the Christian youth cannot attain a knowledge of them without incurring a grave danger to faith or morals. . . . She *assumes*—[therefore, not divinely ordained to her, but self-erogated]—the task of teaching the secular branches *in such a way that religion is the centralizing,* unifying, and vitalizing force in the educational process." (*CE.* xiii, 555.)

A. THE MORAL "FRUITS" OF CHRISTIANITY

THE CHRISTIAN "MORALITY LIE"

"Apart from Religion the observance of the Moral Law is impossible." (*CE.* x, 559.)

"The wonderful efficacy displayed by the religion of Christ in purifying the morals of Europe has no parallel." (*CE.* iii, 34.)

"Her holiness appears in the fruits which she brings forth." (*CE.* iii, 759.)

The above gems of pious self-gratulation are culled from the plethoric treasure-chest of like paste jewels of ecclesiastical false pretense, and are set in high relief as tribute to the presumptuous genius of Pharisaism. A few more out of many may be displayed as a foil

to what follows: "Sound moral instruction is impossible apart from religious education" (*CE.* v, 304),—though this seems to be discounted by this formal admission of the entire efficacy of purely secular ethic of Plato and the Pagans: "All moral conduct may be summed up in the rule: Avoid evil and do good" (*CE.* v, 28); and by this self-evident truth: "Material prosperity and a high degree of civilization may be found where the Church does not exist." (*CE.* iii, 760.) Whether either of these highly beneficent conditions have been found where the Church in plenitude of power and pride did exist, will soon be disclosed. However, these disproofs to the contrary, "The Church has ever affirmed that the beliefs of Theism and morality are essentially connected, and that apart from religion the observance of the moral law is impossible." (*CE.* x, 559.)

Yet we have just read from the teeming pages of *CE.* the glowing tributes to the morally "exalted ideals" of the Pagan Greeks, and that with the Pagan Romans "the moral element predominated"; that "Pagan education, as a whole, was the product of the highest human wisdom that the world has ever known,"—and withal without the Light of the Cross to illumine the Pagan mind and conscience. Indeed, in the next sentences after the last above, *CE.*, waxing philosophical, belies fully its "Morality Lie" thesis, that "apart from religion the observance of the moral law is impossible," by this explicit admission of the *natural* source and origin of Morality: "The Church admits that *the moral law is knowable to reason*: for the due regulation of our free actions, in which morality consists, is simply their right ordering with a view to the perfecting of our rational nature. . . . The Greeks of classical times were in moral questions influenced rather by non-religious conceptions such as that of natural shame than the fear of the gods; while one great religious system, namely Buddhism, explicitly taught the entire independence of the moral code from any belief in God." (*CE.* x, 559.) We shall wonder, as we read the Christian record, how far the "beliefs of Theism" make for morality in higher or more wholesome degree than "the entire independence of the moral code from any belief in God." Morals is from *mores*, "custom"; it is social, not supernatural in origin; humanly conventional, not of divine imposition and sanction. The "morals," customs, of an age or a people depend always on what is then regarded as socially

convenient, on the character of education and example given by their preceptors and their environment.

The foregoing clerical admissions of the purely natural origin and sanctions of morals, of the Moral Law, are perfectly valid and convincing; a more formal and incontrovertible statement of the fact and the principle, taken from a special study of the subject, under the title "*Ethics*" in *CE.*, by a Jesuit Professor of Moral Philosophy, is added for the complete refutation of the Christian "Morality Lie":

"Morality, or sum of prescriptions which govern moral conduct. . . . Ethics takes its origin from the empirical fact that certain general principles and concepts of the moral order *are common to all peoples at all times.* . . . It is a *universally recognized principle* that we should not do to others what we would not wish them to do to us. . . . The *general* practical judgments and principles: 'Do good and avoid evil,' 'Lead a life according to reason,' etc., *from which all the Commandments of the Decalogue are derived,* are the basis of the natural law, of which St. Paul (Rom. ii, 14) says, it is written in the hearts of all men, . . . *made known to all men by nature herself.*" (*CE.* v, 557, 562.)

It is because only of the nauseating persistence of the dingdonging of this pestilent "Christian Morality Lie," by priest, parson and press, that the loathsome record of the unparalleled moral corruption of the Church and of Christendom under the Church, is here in very summary and imperfect manner displayed in refutation of this immense False Pretense. It rings false from every pulpit and Christian apologist today as it has through all the centuries of Creed and Crime of the Church. Here in thumbnail sketch is the summary of Christian results after a millennium of undisputed moral sway: "The Church was the guide of the Western nations from the close of the seventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth" (*CE.* vii, 370); and for result: "At the beginning of the Reformation, the condition of the clergy, and consequently of the people, was a very sad one. . . . The unfortunate state of the clergy, their corrupt morals." (*CE.* vii, 387.) "The Lateran was spoken of as a *brothel,* and the moral corruption of Rome became the subject of general odium." (*CE.* viii, 426.) That there may be no mistake about the insistent pretense of the Church to teach and impose morality, "The Roman Pontiffs have always, as their office demands, guarded the Christian faith and morals," as

admitted by the Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pius IX, dated June 29, 1868, by which he summoned the celebrated Vatican Council which decreed Papal Infallibility in all matters of faith and morals. (*CE.* i, 176.) Therefore it was, that "the Church of the Middle Ages, having now attained to power, continued through her priests to propagate the Gospel. . . . In the wake of religion *follows her inseparable companion, morality.*" (*CE.* xii, 418.) We shall now see the Church at work for morality and the moral "fruits" of Christianity through the Dark Ages of Faith. "Those were indeed golden days for the ecclesiastical profession, since the credulity of men reached a height which seemed to insure to the clergy a long and universal dominion,—until the prospects of the Church were suddenly darkened, and human reason began to rebel . . . with the rise of that secular and skeptical spirit to which European civilization owes its origin," as Buckle says and demonstrates and I will briefly sketch, after first letting *CE.* reveal facts which are the harvest-fruits of Christian Morality.

How, then, are we surprised to read the official confession, that these same Middle Ages were, of all human epochs, "an age of terrible corruption and social decadence"? (*CE.* i, 318.) Surely the good cleric who penned these shaming words was a moral dyspeptic or must have developed a pessimistic in-growing conscience. We turn the pages of this ponderous Apology for the Faith to find the records of Church history giving the lie to this scandalous and disgraceful confession. There are fifteen great quarto tomes of *CE.*, of over 700 double-column pages each; and surely if this confession is mistaken or untrue, the glorious facts of Church morality, its ever-radiant and redolent "sweetness and light," which cannot be hid, will be made manifest for the confusion of those who might mock over this confession. The following paragraphs are the gleanings from just one, the first, of these fifteen volumes, recording the sacred history of the Church, in which "her holiness appears in the fruits which she brings forth," as therein preserved, and unparalleled "in purifying the morals of Europe" for fifteen centuries and more under her undisputed moral sway. In this one sample volume is the true assay of the "fruits" conserved in them all; a typical cross-section of Church history. Multiply by fifteen the product of these revelations of the "fruits which she

brings forth," and even the most unregenerate critic of Christianity must agree with *CE*, that "the wonderful efficacy of the religion of Christ in purifying the morals of Europe has no parallel" in any religion or history known to mankind. The following passages are word for word from Volume I—(unless otherwise indicated),—of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, arranged roughly in chronological order, through part only of one letter of the Alphabet. They give thus a sort of segmentary cross-cut and bird's-eye-view of the moral and social conditions of Christendom through the centuries, with quite imperfect glimpses of that sweet charity one to another which distinguishes those who love their enemies—in the fashion of King Richard to his brother: "For I do love my brother Clarence so, That I would see his sweet soul In the bosom of good old Abraham!"

Countless instances of Christian "morality" we have already seen in the myriad holy forgeries of the Church throughout fifteen centuries; again are confessed "the many apocryphal [forged] writings in the first five centuries of the Christian era." (*CE.* i, 132.) Whoever would forge for Christ's sake or his own profit would as readily commit any other crime for the same ends, as we shall see to the limit of abhorrence. But the predilect perversity of the Christians clerical and lay, was the "lusts of the flesh," that distinctive "crime" so proscribed and so practiced by the expounders of "Christian virtue," and the "inseparable companion" of the most religious. That "sex-scandals" were rampant in the earliest days of the several infant Churches is manifest in quite all of the second-century Epistles of the New Testament, as any one may read unto edification. The *Agape*, or Christian "love feast" was all its name implies; it was "a form of ancient Pagan funeral feast. From the fourth century onward . . . the *agape* gave rise to flagrant and intolerable abuses" (i, 202). From the first century, "the *Agapetæ* were virgins who consecrated themselves to God with a vow of chastity and associated with laymen, who like themselves had taken a vow of chastity. . . . It resulted in abuses and scandals. . . . . St. Jerome [about 400] asked indignantly, 'Why was this pest of *Agapetæ* introduced into the Church?' St. Cyprian shows that abuses of this kind developed in Africa and the East. The Council of Ancyra, in 314, forbade virgins consecrated to God to thus live with men as sisters. This did not correct the practice entirely, for St. Je-

rome arraigns Syrian monks for living in cities with Christian virgins. These *Agapetæ* are sometimes confounded with the *Subintroductæ*, or women who lived with clerics without marriage." (202.)

St. Cyprian, *On the State of the Church*, just before the Decian persecution (c. 250), admits: "There was no true devotion in the priests. . . . That the simple were deluded, and the brethren circumvented by craft and fraud. That great numbers of the bishops . . . were eager only to heap up money, to seize people's lands by treachery and fraud, and to increase their stock by exhorbitant usury." (Quoted by Middleton, *Free Inquiry*, Int. Disc. lxvii–ix.)

"Solicitation, in canon law, is the crime of making use of the Sacrament of Penance for the purpose of drawing others into sins of lust. Numerous popes have denounced this crime vehemently, and decreed punishments for its commission . . . in connection with the Confessional, during or before" (xiv, 134). "The crime of abduction was, doubtless, extremely rare among the early Christians. In the fourth century, when men grew bolder, the number of wife-captors became exceedingly numerous. To check this"—a long line of Church enactments listed, down to the Council of Trent (1500's) was futile. (*CE.* i, 33.) While some of the following descriptions are applied to particular time and place, yet as is evident from the content and ensemble, like conditions existed "always and everywhere" through the Middle Ages, that delectable "civilization thoroughly saturated with Christianity." Thus "even in the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom testifies to the decline of fervor in the Christian family, and contends that it is no longer possible for children to obtain proper religious and moral training in their own homes" (555), already so debased was Christianity.

Loving Christian differences of opinion, enhanced by corporal methods of seeking each to force the other to the same opinion, were so ubiquitous and universal that birth was given to a special and deadly new species of human hatred and a distinctive name coined for it: *Odium Theologicum*—Theological Hatred, and the maxim: "Hell hath no fury like an offended Saint." The Father of Church History, Bishop Eusebius, has scathing passages, and he refuses "to record the dissensions and follies which they exercised against each other before the (Diocletian) persecution." (*Hist. Eccles.* Bk. VIII, chap. 2.)

And in Chapter 12, entitled "The Prelates of the Church," Eusebius wordily and in figured speech thus in substance describes them: "the different heads of the churches, who from being shepherds of the reasonable flocks of Christ, . . . were condemned by divine justice as unworthy of such a charge; . . . moreover, the ambitious aspirings of many to office, and the injudicious and unlawful ordinations that took place, the divisions among the confessors themselves, the great schisms and difficulties industriously fomented by the factious, . . . heaping up affliction upon affliction: all this I have resolved to pass by," as too shameful to be preserved in detail. Speaking of the Church historian Socrates, who died about 400: "Living as he did in an age of bitter polemics, he strove to avoid the animosities and hatreds engendered by theological differences." (*CE.* xiv, 119.)

We recall the embittered and bloody strifes which waged from the early days of the fourth century between the partizans of Arius, who denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ and consequently the existence of the Blessed Trinity or Three-in-One Godhead, and the "orthodox" or "right-thinking" faction which vociferated that Father and Son were of the same eternal age and "*homoöusion*" or "of the same substance,"—of which puzzle it is assured: "It is manifest that a dogma so mysterious presupposes a divine revelation." (*CE.* ix, 309.) But that "divine revelation" was let into the clerical mind through the efficacious grace of clubs, stones and knives, by force of fraud and deviltry, as thus witnessed: "The great definition of the Homoöusion, promulgated at Nicæa in 325, so far from putting an end to further discussion, became rather the occasion of keener *debate* and for still more distressing *confusion* of statement in the formulation of *theories* on the relationship of Our Lord to His Father. [Other angry Councils with the Holy Ghost were held on the "theory"] at Ariminum for the West, and at Seleucia for the East, in 359. At both Councils, *as the result of dishonest intrigue and an unscrupulous use of intimidation, . . . the Homoöusion was given up* and the Son was declared to be merely similar to—no longer identical in substance with—the Father. St. Jerome's characterization of the issue still affords the best commentary: 'The whole world groaned in wonderment to find itself Arian.'" (*CE.* i, 79.) Thus are divine revelations made manifest! The Christian trait of love for enemies is exemplified: "The sudden

death of Arius [attributed to poison] was looked upon by contemporary Catholics *as an answer to the prayers* of the good bishop." (*CE.* i, 285.) All the "new nations" except the Franks, converted under Clovis, were "Arian heretics"; and for some four centuries maybe a million throats were cut in the name of One God or Three, before the "divine revelation" of Three-in-One won out.

"The accession of Constantine found the African Church rent by controversies and heresies: Catholics and Donatists contended not only in a wordy warfare, but also in a violent and sanguinary way. . . . Attempts at reconciliation, at the suggestion of the Emperor Constantius, only widened the breach, and led to armed repression, an ever-growing discontent, and an enmity that became more and more embittered. . . . One act of violence followed another and begot new conflicts. . . . Even in such condition of peril—[the bitter reprisals of the Arian Vandals which filled the fifth century], the Christians of Africa were far from showing those virtues which might be looked for in a time of persecution. . . . Crimes of all kinds made Africa one of the most wretched provinces in the world. Nor had the Vandals escaped the effects of this moral corruption, which slowly destroyed their power and eventually effected their ruin. . . . While one part of the episcopate wasted its time and energies in fruitless theological discussions, others failed of their duty. The last forty years of the seventh century witnessed the gradual fall of the fragments of Byzantine Africa into the hands of the Arabs. . . . In this overwhelming disaster the African Church was blotted out." (*CE.* i, 191–2.) God failed to protect his Holy own!

If prelates and priests, the shepherds of the flocks, wallowed in moral defilement, judge of the state of the witless sheep of the heavenly fold. "Valence, the central see of the Kingdom, had been scandalized by the dissolute Bishop Maximus, and the see in consequence had been vacant for fifty years," till 486. (616.) "Pope St. Agapetus I (535–536) was the son of a Roman priest slain during the riots in the days of Pope Symmachus. His first official act was to burn in the presence of the assembled clergy the anathema which Boniface II had propounded against the latter's rival Dioscurus" (202). St. Angilbert, Abbott, "at this period [about 790] was leading a very worldly life. . . . Angilbert undoubtedly had an intrigue with Charlemagne's un-

married daughter Bertha, and became by her the father of two children" (490). "On the death of Pope Formosus (896) there began for the papacy *a time of the deepest humiliation,* such as it has never experienced before or since. After the successor of Formosus, Boniface VI, had ruled only fifteen days, Stephen VI (properly, VII), was raised to the Papal Chair. In his blind rage, Stephen not only abused the memory of Formosus but also treated his body with indignity. Stephen was strangled in prison in the summer of 897, and the six following popes (to 904) owed their elevation to the struggles of the political parties. Christophorus, the last of them, was overthrown by Sergius III (904–911)." (ii, 147.) Pope Agapetus II (946–956), "for ten years, during what has been termed *the period of deepest humiliation* for the papacy. . . . He laboured incessantly to restore the decadent discipline in churches and cloisters; and in quieting disturbances in the metropolitan see of Rheims; and at putting an end to anarchy in Italy" (i, 203). Such periods of "deepest humiliation to the papacy" were quite recurrent: "The Popes Benedict from the fourth to the ninth inclusive belong to *the darkest period of papal history* (900–1048) . . . Benedict VI was thrown into prison by the antipope Boniface VII, and strangled by his orders, in 974. Benedict VII was a layman and became pope by force, and drove out Boniface VII; died 983. . . . Pope Benedict IX had long caused scandal to the Church by his disorderly life. His immediate successor, Pope Gregory VI (1044–46) had persuaded Benedict IX to resign the Chair of Peter, and to do so bestowed valuable possessions on him" (31).

"There can be no doubt that at this period (800's) the law of celibacy was ill observed by priests" (507). St. Arialdo was 'martyred at Milan in 1065, for his attempt to reform the simoniacal and immoral clergy of that city. . . . For inveighing against abuses he was excommunicated by the bishop" (707). Pope Alexander II (1061–73) was a leader in "that great agitation against simony and clerical incontinence. . . . A faction elected Honorius II as pope—public opinion clamoring for reform. Alexander was omnipresent, through his legates, punishing simoniacal bishops and incontinent clergy" (286). "The Church at that time (1072) was torn by the schisms of anti-popes" (541).—"The desperate moral barbarism of the age." (vii, 229.) Pope Anacletus II (1130–38) had before his election sup-

ported the popes in their fifty years' war for reform. If we can believe his enemies, he disgraced his office by gross immorality and by his greed in the accumulation of lucre. There can be no doubt that he determined to buy or force his way into the Papal Chair. . . . On the death of Honorius, two popes, Anacletus II and Innocent II were elected and consecrated on the same day, by the factions in the Sacred College. . . . When Anacletus died, another anti-pope, Victor IV, was elected by one faction" (447).

The "glorious thirteenth century," which the Faithful for some unfathomable reason exalt proudly above all the others of the Dark Ages of Faith, was ushered in with the murderous Holy Inquisition and the unholy crusade against the Albigenses, tens of thousands of whom were butchered and the fairest half of France laid desolate. The motive for this unprecedented butchery and devastation is naïvely confessed to be "their *wealth* . . . their contempt for the Catholic clergy, caused by the ignorance and the worldly, too frequently scandalous lives of the latter" (268). "With the zeal of an apostle St. Anthony [d. 1231] undertook to reform the morality of his time; . . . enormous scandals were repaired" (557). "The barons of the Campagna fought with each other and with the Pope and, issuing from their castles, raided the country in every direction, and even robbed the pilgrims on their way to the tombs of the Apostles. . . . William I took captive many wealthy Greeks, the greater number of whom he sold into slavery" (157). "A period of decline followed after the middle of the thirteenth century, when war and rapine did much injury . . . suffered again in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from the prevailing social disturbances" (145). "Pope Alexander IV (1254–61) was easily led away by the whisperings of flatterers, and inclined to listen to the wicked suggestions of avaricious persons. . . . He continued Innocent IV's policy of a war of extermination against the progeny of Frederick II. . . . The pecuniary assistance these measures brought him was dearly bought by the embitterment of the English clergy and people against the Holy See. . . . The unity of Christendom was a thing of the past" (288). About 1300, "all looked forward to the time when the religious orders, whose laxity had been occasioned in great measure by *the general looseness of the times*, would be restored to their former discipline" (484).

Under Pope Alexander V (1409–1410) "The Great Schism (1378–1417) rent the Church. As cardinal he had sanctioned the agreement of the rival Colleges of Cardinals to join in a common effort for unity. He thus incurred the displeasure of Gregory XII [who deposed him]. At the Council of Pisa (1409) he preached the opening sermon, a scathing condemnation of the rival popes, and presided at the deliberations of the theologians who declared those popes heretics and schismatics . . . in the riven Catholic world. . . . His legitimacy was soon questioned, and the world was chagrined to find that instead of two popes it now had three. . . . Whether or not Alexander was a true pope is a question still discussed" (288–9).

Speaking of "moral" conditions in the Holy City and prevailing in the age, *CE.* thus summarizes the "sweetness and light" of Christendom in the time of His Holiness Sixtus IV (died 1484): "His dominating passion was nepotism, heaping riches and favors on his unworthy relatives. His nephew, the Cardinal Rafael Riario, plotted to overthrow the Medici; the pope was cognizant of the plot, though probably not of the intention to assassinate, and even laid Florence under an interdict because it rose in fury against the conspirators and brutal murderers of Giuliano dei Medici. Henceforth, until the Reformation, the secular interests of the papacy were of paramount importance. The attitude of Sixtus towards the conspiracy of the Pazzi, his wars and treachery, his promotion to the highest offices in the Church of such men as . . . are blots upon his career. Nevertheless, there is a praiseworthy side to his pontificate. He took measures to suppress abuses in the Inquisition, vigorously opposed the Waldenses, and annulled the decrees of the Council of Constance . . . Under him *Rome became once more habitable,* and he did much to improve the sanitary conditions of the city." (*CE.* xiv, 32, 33.)

Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) was so notoriously infamous and his history is so large and so well known, with his six bastards, including Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia, and his numerous Vatican mistresses and dissolute Papal Court, under whose régime again "the Vatican was a brothel," that he is simply mentioned in his order. When one of his bastard sons "was fished out of the Tiber with his throat cut . . . that it was a warning from Heaven to repent, no one felt more keenly than the Pope himself. He spoke of resigning; and proclaimed his

determination to set about *that reform of the Church 'in Head and members' for which the world had so long been clamoring"*; but his grief was assuaged by the attentions of his lady loves, notably pretty Guilia Farnese, niece of the Cardinal, and whose picture as an angel now adorns one of the great frescos of the Vatican. "Long ago Leo the Great (440–461) declared, 'the dignity of Peter suffers no diminution even in an unworthy successor.'" (289, 294, *passim.*) Maybe so; but *the question simply is, "the unparalleled purification of morals" produced by the religion of Christ!*

About this juncture, and after a thousand years of such conditions in the Church and the Heads of the Church, popes, prelates, priests, and monks, and rife among the degraded people, the protests of Christendom swelling steadily for several centuries broke into the Protestant Reformation by force and arms. A thumbnail sketch of the culmination and the causes leading up to it throughout the Middle Age "civilization thoroughly saturated with Christianity," is drawn by *CE.* in two paragraphs here quoted:

"At the time of Gregory VII's elevation to the papacy (1073–85), *the Christian world was in a deplorable condition.* During the desolating period of transition—the terrible period of warfare and rapine, violence, and corruption in high places, which followed immediately upon the dissolution of the Carlovingian Empire [in the 800's], a period when society in Europe seemed doomed to destruction and ruin —the Church had not been able to escape from *the general debasement* [to which it had so signally contributed, if not caused]. The tenth century, the saddest perhaps, in Christian annals, is characterized by the vivid remark of [Cardinal] Baronius that Christ was as asleep in the vessel of the Church. At the time of Leo IX's election in 1049, according to the testimony of St. Bruno, Bishop of Segni, 'the whole world lay in wickedness, holiness had disappeared, justice had perished, and truth had been buried; Simon Magus was lording it over the Church, whose bishops were given to luxury and fornication.' St. Peter Damien, the fiercest censor of his age, unrolls a frightful picture of the decay of clerical morality in the lurid pages of his 'Book of Gomorrah.' . . . Writing in 1075, Gregory himself laments the unhappy state of the Church. 'The Eastern Church has fallen away from the Faith and is now assailed on every side by infidels. Wherever I

turn my eyes—to the west, to the north, to the south,—I find everywhere bishops who have obtained their office in an irregular way, whose lives and conversations are strangely at variance with their sacred calling; who go through their duties not for the love of Christ but from motives of worldly gain. And those among whom I live are worse than Jews or Pagans.' . . . Gregory made every effort to stamp out of the Church the two consuming evils of the age, simony and clerical incontinency. . . . Gregory began his great work of purifying the Church by a reformation of the clergy. In 1074 he enacted the following decrees [a series aimed at the two universal vices named]. But they met with vigorous resistance, . . . called forth a most violent storm of opposition throughout Italy, Germany, and France. And the reason for this opposition on the part of the vast throng of immoral and simoniacal clerics is not far to seek." (*CE.* vi, 793–4.) Still, nearly five centuries later:

"Churchmen in high places were constantly unmindful of truth, justice, purity, self-denial; many had lost all sense of Christian ideals; not a few were deeply stained by Pagan [?] vices. . . . The earlier years of Æneas Sylvius [Pope Pius II, 1458–64], the whole career of Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI), the life of Farnese, afterwards Paul III, until he was compelled to reform himself as well as the Curia, . . . all with disregard for the most elementary virtues. Julius II fought and intrigued like a mere secular prince; Leo X, although certainly not an unbeliever—[it was His Holiness who framed the famous "witty epigram: 'What profit has not that Fable of Christ brought us' "; *Encyc. Brit.*, 14th Ed. xix, 217]—was frivolous in the extreme; Clement VII drew on himself the contempt as well as hatred of all who had dealings with him, by his crooked ways and cowardly subterfuges which led to the taking and pillage of Rome. Now, it is not unfair to trace in these popes, as in their advisers, a certain common type, the pattern of which was Cesare Borgia, sometime cardinal, but always in mind and action a condottiere [bandit], while its philosopher was Machiavelli. We may express it in the words of Villari as a 'prodigious intellectual activity accompanied by moral decay.' . . . Not only did they fall away from monastic severities, they lost all manly and decent self-control. . . . Worse things than Savonarola had seen were to happen. And a catastrophe was inevitable. Erasmus laughed

to scorn the Ciceronian pedantries [of sundry Cardinals named]; he quotes with disgust the paganizing terms in which some Roman preachers travestied the persons and scenes of the Gospels, . . . outcry against cancerous vices which were sapping the life of Italy. . . . [Some] demanded reform according to Catholic principles [!]; . . . [Others] taught education in principle and practice on orthodox lines. . . . The Sorbonne objected, however, to any publication of Scripture without approved Catholic notes; and this in a day which might be justly termed one of rebuke and blasphemy. . . . Poggio, the mocking adversary of the clergy, was for half a century in the service of the popes. Filelfo, a pagan unabashed and foul, was rewarded by Nicholas V for his abominable satires. Pius II had the faults of a smart society journalist, and took neither himself nor his age seriously. Platina, with whom Paul II quarreled on political grounds, wrote a vindicative slanderous book, 'The Lives of the Roman Pontiffs,' which, however, was in some degree justified by the project of reformation 'in Head and members' *constantly put forth and never fulfilled* until Christendom had been rent in twain." (*CE.* xii, 767–768.)

Speaking again of prevailing conditions at the end of a thousand years of inspired care of the Christian morals, by their Holinesses, the following sentences culled from one article are a little cluster of the "fruits" of Christianity: "The scientific and ascetic training of the clergy left much to be desired, the moral standard of many being very low, and the practice of celibacy not everywhere observed. Not less serious was the condition of many monasteries of men, and even of women. . . . The members of the clergy were in many places regarded with scorn. . . . As to the Christian people itself, in numerous districts ignorance, superstition, religious indifference, and immorality were rife. . . . Worldly ideas, luxury and immorality rapidly gained ground at the centre of ecclesiastical life. When ecclesiastical authority grew weak at the fountain head, it necessarily decayed elsewhere. . . . In proportion as the papal authority lost the respect of many, resentment grew against both the Curia and the Papacy. . . . This vast ecclesiastical wealth, . . . such riches in the hands of the clergy. . . . Higher intellectual culture was confined in a great measure to the higher clergy. . . . The parochial clergy were to a

great extent ignorant and indifferent." (*CE.* xii, 700–703, *passim.*)

The Church leaped to arms to prevent any reform of these degrading conditions to which her holy guidance had brought Christendom, and for over a century, until the Religious Peace of 1648, with fire and sword made Europe a slaughter-pen in the desperate effort to suppress the revolt and force its forged faith and its creed of love and morals, which we have just seen exemplified, down the throats of revolted and disgusted humanity. The Dominican "Dogs of the Lord" were let loose in all the bloody fiery fury of the Holy Inquisition; Alva, Tilly and Wallenstein ravaged and destroyed Europe, culminating in the glories of Magdeburg and St. Bartholomew for which His Holiness and his Church sang *Te Deums.* "Soon the Counter-Reformation, called into life by the Council of Trent (1545–63) to prevent the loss of the whole of middle Europe, appeared; its success was assured by the aid of the Society of Jesus." (*CE.* v, 612.) Abetted by the crafty and cruel Society of Jesus, under its renowned leader this miracle is said to have been wrought: "St. Ignatius, alive to *the causes which had provoked so many nations to revolt from the clergy* . . . did the most astonishing feat recorded in modern history. He *reformed the Church* by means of the *papacy when sunk to its lowest ebb;* and he took the heathen classics from neo-pagans to make them the instruments of Catholic education. . . . In May, 1527, Rome was laid waste, its churches profaned, its libraries pillaged, by a rabble of miscreants. 'But,' said the Cardinal Cajetan, 'it was a just judgment on the Romans.' . . . It was a change so marked that Scaliger termed the Italians generally hypocrites. . . . The papacy aimed henceforth at becoming an 'ideal government under spiritual and converted men.' Urban VIII (1623–44) was the last who could be deemed a Renaissance pontiff." (*CE.* xii, 769.) This was over one hundred years after the boasted "reformation in Head and members."

So here the Augean stables were at length cleansed; the papacy—for the fourth time in Volume I recorded as "sunk to its lowest ebb," was now to be "an ideal government under spiritual and converted men," and the chronic millennial infamies of Holy Church washed out by a baptism of Faith and "good works meet unto repentance." But was it so?

Adrian VI was Holiness of Rome in 1522–1523: "Appalling tasks

lay before him in this [again] *darkest hour of the Papacy.* To extirpate inveterate abuses; to reform a court which thrived on corruption, and detested the very name of reform; to hold in leash the young and warlike princes, ready to bound at each other's throats,—these were herculean labours. . . . His nuncio to Germany, Chierigati, [made the exaggerated] acknowledgment, that the Roman Court had been the fountain-head of all the corruptions in the Church. Cardinal Adrian of Castello (in 1517) was implicated in a charge of conspiring with Cardinal Petrucci to poison the pope Leo X, and confessed" (i, 160). "Under the direct orders of the pope, Clement VII, Archbishop B. [in 1538] caused many [Protestants in Scotland] to . . . be put to death. Modern humanity condemns the cruel manner of their execution; but such severities were the *result of the spirit of the age*" (ii, 374),—which quite as thoroughly inspired the same Protestants and was as villainously practiced by them when they had the chance. The sixteenth century was "a scandalous age." (*CE.* ii, 375.) About 1600 a special Papal representative "was commissioned to reform a convent at Naples, which by the laxity of its discipline had become a source of great scandal. Certain wicked men were accustomed to have clandestine meetings with the nuns" (i, 472). Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667) was "elected after a struggle of eighty days; at a time when churchmen were being forced to realize the deplorable consequences, moral and financial, of nepotism; . . . nepotic abuses came to weigh as heavily *as ever* upon the papacy . . . endeavours to enrich their families" (294). Pope Alexander VIII (1689–1691) "bestowed on his relations the riches they were eager to accumulate; in their behalf, and to the discredit of his pontificate, he revived sinecure offices. Out of compassion for the poor of well-nigh impoverished Italy, he sought to succor them by reducing the taxes" (295).

"The eighteenth century was not an age remarkable for depth of spiritual life" (334). "Here [in the bishopric of St. Agatha, near Naples, in 1762] with 30,000 uninstructed people, 400 mostly indifferent and sometimes scandalous secular clergy, and 17 more or less relaxed religious houses . . . a field so overgrown with weeds that they seemed the only crop" (337). In 1799 "*people were already rejoicing that the Papacy and the Church had come to an end.* But the priest, Count Antonio Rosmini . . . published his ideas in 1848 in

the treatise 'Of the Five Plagues of the Church,' in which he also particularly recommended the *reform of the Church. . . . The demand for reform in the States of the Church was in fact* not unjustified." (*CE.* xiv, 264, 265.) Much later like data could be added.

Thus in our search for its sweetness and light, we have as it were scratched the surface of the history of Holy Church, for a thousand five hundred years, as recorded by itself; thus in one volume out of fifteen have we verified the priestly boast: "Her holiness appears in the fruits which she brings forth." The most lurid features, as under long lines of Holinesses, for example, Benedicts, Eugenes, and Johns, fall outside our limited alphabetical scope; we have made no note of the interminable political wars and throat-cuttings joyously promoted by fifteen hundred years of Popes; nor of the infinite blood-lust and greed of the execrated Holy Inquisition and of interminable successions of Popes, papal Curias and blood-sodden prelates. The choice of every Pope is guided by the Holy Ghost itself, aided indirectly but effectively in a hundred instances by bribery and the dagger. Even this trinity of Holy Electors of the Vicars of God has not always kept the "Succession of Peter" in a straight line; a goodly number of times the Spirit has descended upon numerous doublets and triplets of Holinesses at one and the same time: "At various times in the history of the Church illegal pretenders to the Papal Chair have arisen, and frequently exercised pontifical functions in defiance of the true occupant. According to Hergenröther, there are 29 [doublet and triplet sets] in the following order,"—naming them, beginning about 200 A. D. and extending down to 1449. (*CE.* i, 582.) The turmoils and scandals leading to and resulting from these, the priestly anathemas spit at each other, the blood and terror, and the unspeakably debased social conditions which made it all possible—in the name of Christ, can be but faintly imagined. This is but a fractional and imperfect inventory of the crops of "the fruits which she has brought forth" since her first budding out of the graft of Forgery and Fraud upon the iron stock of Force.

What price Religion! Paganism—and Christianity! Which—upon the record—has been the more shameless and debauched, and wrought the worst for morality and civilization? If, but for the glorious "civilizing effects" of Christianity, "civilization would have been retarded

for a thousand years"—What would not Civilization be today but for the "sweetness and light" of the Church and its Dark Ages of Faith?

B. THE INTELLECTUAL "FRUITS" OF CHRISTIANITY

THE CHRISTIAN "EDUCATION LIE"

"Of course, the beginnings of all profane knowledge can be traced back to the time when 'priest' and 'scholar' meant one and the same thing." (*CE.* vi, 447.)

"There is nothing more despicable than an ignorant priest." *Cardinal Farnese.* (*CE.* v, 788–9.)

A panoramic view, sketched by pious clerical pens, has passed before us, depicting in high light the outlines of moral and intellectual culture of two civilizations: the one Pagan, secular, brilliant, of pre-Christian Greece and Rome; the other "a civilization thoroughly saturated with Christianity," with Christian morality and culture;—this section, added from *CE.*, must determine its intellectual achievements. So insistent and ever-proclaimed are the clerical claims for the education of Christendom, and its "Christian civilization," which, without its glorious and heroic activities, "would have been retarded for a thousand years," that it is but just and fair to let the Church repeat several times what it claims to have done; then let it tell in its own words what it did.

Here are a few of the exalted cultural claims of the Church: "The Church, although officially the teacher of revealed truth only, has always been interested in the cultivation of every branch of human knowledge. But *the truth unfolded by reason cannot contradict the truth revealed by God!* The Encyclical next shows, by extracts from many Fathers of the Church, what reason helped by revelation can do for [to] the progress of human knowledge"! (Encyc. *Æterni-Patris,* Leo XIII, 1879; *CE.* i, 177.) "The Christian Church during this era—a fact of the greatest importance—was the guardian of the remains of classical literature." (*CE.* vi, 485.) "The preservation of the fragments of Greek and Roman classics now extant is largely due to the monasteries, which for twelve centuries after the fall of the Western Empire were the custodians of manuscripts of the ancient

Greek philosophy and the Latin rhetoricians." (*CE.* i, 696.) "In addition to their prescribed studies, *the monks were constantly occupied in* copying the classic texts." (*CE.* v, 303.)

THE MONKS "PRESERVED THE CLASSICS"

In the sweet-sounding music of this clerical chorus, a rudely jarring discord is struck by these dissonant notes: "The *revival* of the classics, *lost for a thousand years in Western Christendom.* . . . The *loss* of Greek authors and the *decline* of Church Latin *into barbarism* were misfortunes *in a universal ruin.*" (*CE.* xii, 277.) An attempt by Charlemagne to establish even rudimentary education was abortive, and "the accumulated wisdom of the past . . . was in danger of perishing," but "When the permanent *renaissance of learning came several centuries later, the light began* again to pierce through the storm-clouds of feudal strife and anarchy." (*CE.* i, 277.) We shall see that every scrap of Greek and Latin learning which, after twelve centuries, slowly filtered into Christendom, came from the hated Arabs through the more hated Jews, after Christian first contact with civilization through the Crusades: "Indeed, whatever influence came from the Mosque passed through the Synagogue before it reached the Church." (*CE.* i, 676.)

In one singular and unintentional way, however, is it true that "the preservation of *fragments* of Greek and Roman classics is due to the monasteries, which were the custodians of manuscripts of the ancient Greek philosophy," science, and literature. Such manuscripts existed in great numbers in the age of Greek and Roman culture; they were written on enduring parchment. When the Light of the Cross dimmed Pagan culture, and its learning became abhorrent to the pious Christian, the monks needed papyrus for their literary efforts, so they gathered in the manuscripts wherever found;—and thus they "preserved" them: "Due to cost of vellum, old books were *scraped* and used again"—(that is the meaning of "Palimpsest")—for the scribbling of the precious monkish chronicles and theological folderol soon to be noticed. "In the West much use was made of old manuscripts from the seventh to the ninth century, when, in consequence of the disturbed state of the country, there was some scarcity of material, and the old

volumes of *neglected* authors were used for more *popular* works. . . . The practice continued down to the sixteenth century. Many Latin and most Greek manuscripts are on reused vellum. A manuscript in the Vatican contained part of the 91st Book of Livy's 'Roman History.' The famous Sinai Bible discovered by Tischendorff was written over by lives of female saints. Parts of the Iliad and the 'Elements' of Euclid were covered by monkish treatises. The 'De Republica' of Cicero was discovered under the Commentary of Augustine on Psalms, and several of his Orations under the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon." Other such monkish palimpsests were discovered to contain the Institutes of Gaius; eight orations of the Roman senator Symmachus, the Comedies of Plautus, parts of Euripides, epistles of Antoninus Pius, Lucius Verus, Marcus Aurelius, and others, the 'Fasti Consolaris' of 486, the Codex Theodosianus, are among the precious remains of Greek and Roman erudition which were "preserved" in this monkish fashion in the erudite monasteries. (*NIE.* xvii, 762–3.) As for "monks constantly occupied in copying the classic texts," for the preservation and diffusion of Pagan culture, it is a joke! They couldn't read Greek nor good Latin, and nobody else could read at all;—also, Holy Church and Churchmen loathed Pagan culture and literature.

The Church, however, got an early and fair start on its wonderful career as the organizer and creator of civilization. In 529 [by priest-prompted edict of Justinian] "the schools of philosophy were closed. From that date Christianity had no rival." (*CE.* ii, 43.) We have read the Imperial Law of Justinian with the fatal title: "Pagans Forbidden to give Instruction"; consequently "the State schools of the Empire had fallen into decay." (*CE.* xiii, 555.) Thenceforth the Church, inspired by its Holy Ghost, was the sole Mentor and Instructor of Christendom. Before the dazzling Light diffused by the Church blinds us to the view, let us take a farewell look at the Pagan civilization of the Roman world, as recorded under the Antonine Emperors and their successors, such conditions prevailing quite up to the era of Justinian and the Church;—it will be a millennium and a half before we see a spark of such like:

"The internal peace and prosperity were no less remarkable than the absence of war. Trade and commence flourished; new routes were opened, and new roads built throughout the Empire, so that all parts

of it were in close touch with the capital. The remarkable municipal life of the period, when new and flourishing cities covered the Roman world, is revealed by the numerous inscriptions that record the generosity of wealthy patrons or the activity of free burghers. . . . Guilds and organizations of all conceivable kinds, *mainly for philanthropic purposes*, came into existence everywhere. By means of these associations the poorer classes were in a sense insured against poverty. . . . The activity of the Emperor was not confined to merely official acts; private movements *for the succour of the poor and of orphans* received his unstinted support. The scope of the alimentary institutions of former reigns was broadened, and the establishment *of charitable foundations* such as that of the 'Puellae Faustinianae' is a sure indication of a general softening of manners and a truer sense of humanity. The period was also one of considerable literary and scientific activity. . . . The most lasting influence of the life and reign of Antoninus was that which he exercised in the sphere of law. Five great Stoic jurisconsults [named] were the constant advisers of the Emperor, and under his protection they infused a spirit of leniency and mildness into Roman legislation which effectually safeguarded the weak and unprotected, slaves, wards, and orphans, against aggressions of the powerful. . . . An impulse was given in this direction which produced the later golden period of Roman jurisprudence under Septimus Severus, Caracalla, and Alexander Severus." (*CE.* i, 587.)

For vivid contrast, we may here recall the "vivid remark" of Bishop St. Bruno, in the year 1049, that "justice had perished" (*CE.* vi, 793); and the confession, relating to the beginning of the Reformation five hundred years later: "Churchmen in high places were constantly unmindful of justice." (*CE.* xii, 767.) The "golden period of Roman jurisprudence" had been replaced by Christian "superstitions in the administration of justice during many centuries of the Middle Ages, and known as ordeals or 'judgments of God.' . . . These 'judgments of God' gave rise to new superstitions. Whether guilty or not, persons subjected to the trials would often put more confidence in charms, magic formulas, and ointments than in the Providence of God." (*CE.* xiv, 341.) Up to as late as 1538 "the legal lore had hitherto been presented in a very barbarous form." (*CE.* i, 273.) As for benevolence, charity, the care of the poor, the protection of the weak against the

strong, the cursory Pagan record just quoted must suffice; their continuance in the Christian Dark Ages is sufficiently belied by the shocking social conditions to be cursorily noticed in the general cultural sketch to follow. As for widows and orphans, one of the proudest brags of the clerics, the Church by sword and rack and stake, has made an infinity more of widows and orphans that she ever scantily cared for in her monkish lazzarettos and pestilential lying-in shambles. With respect to slavery, which the Church boasts to have suppressed, this pious lie is nailed by the fact of the gradual shifting of technical slavery into universal serfdom throughout Europe for centuries, and its persistence in "Christian" England, America and Brazil until almost the present generation, and the existence today of millions of slaves in very Christian Abyssinia; and the world knows the part which the Christian soulsavers took in the United States in upholding slavery as a God-ordained institution of the Blessed Bible. But the Church not only aided and abetted slavery; it owned slaves, and it actively engaged in the most revolting forms of slave-trade: "Clement V (1309) *decreed* that resisting Venetians should be sold into slavery, and Gregory XI and Sixtus IV [of blessed memory] *decreed* the same for the Florentines, and Julius II for both Florence and Bologna. The *Bull* by which Nicholas V (1442) *encouraged* Portugal to what became the organized trade in negro slaves. . . . In 1538 Paul III *decreed slavery* against all *Englishmen* who should dare to support Henry VIII against the pope"! (*Encyc. Brit.*, 14th ed. xix, 35.)

The Church mightily prides itself on its suppression of the bloody sports of the arena, the gladiatorial combats, because the monk Telemachus, after 400 A. D., jumped into the arena (with two Pagan companions) and protested against them, which act incited the *Pagan* throng in the Ampitheatre to urge their abolition. But for four hundred years nor Church nor Christian had raised a voice of protest; and during as much of this period as it had the power, the Church was merrily murdering Pagans and heretics; and the cruelties of free combat in the arena were speedily replaced by the infamous torturings and slow burnings of countless human beings for Christ's sweet sake: while bull-fights adorn every holiday and holy day of the "Most Christian" countries today. Fie for Christian "reforms"!

THE "TRIUMPH" OF CHRISTIANITY

Following upon the Pagan cultural civilization depicted by *CE.* existing in the closing epoch of the Roman Empire, we have a lengthy account by the same clerical scholars of the Christian culture of the ensuing Age of Faith: "The learning and opinions of the first [Christian] few hundred years were comprehensively set forth in the tremendous work of Isidore of Seville (d. 636). During the *next few centuries*, which were comparatively *barren of literary achievements*, the *only men* to achieve any celebrity were [five named up to 1003]." . . . Others are named up to 1280,—"For all these Albertus Magnus had opened the door to the rich treasure-house of Greek and Arabian learning." (*CE.* vi, 449, 450.) The principal product of Christian erudition up to these times was ludicrous lying legends and saint and martyr tales: "Needless to say that they do not embody any real historical information, and their chief utility is to afford an example of *the pious popular credulity of the times*" (*CE.* i, 131). The state of Christian historical lore through these ages may be appreciated by the following summary:

"The historical literature of the Middle Ages may be classed under three general heads: chronicles, annals, and lives of saints. . . . As a matter of fact, profane history, as dealt with by Pagan historians, no longer appealed to Christian writers. History, as viewed from the Christian standpoint, took into account *only* the Kingdom of God, and to the new generation [of Christians] the centre of such history was the narration of the misfortunes undergone by the Jewish nation, a subject ignored by the Roman historians. Christians had need of a new general history in sympathy with their ideal. . . . Under Charlemagne . . . the great internal misfortunes and dissensions of the kingdom are carefully ignored, so as not to cast discredit on the reigning princes. . . . The majority of these local chronicles reproduce the traditions, popular or local, of the monastery which they concern and confine themselves to recording gossip and various kinds of information, . . . without asking themselves whether the version of these sources had been tainted with legends, and they did not take the trouble to examine the origin and value of their information. . . . The authors were bounded by a limited horizon, often equipped with merely a rudimentary training. Such chronicles, moreover, were often written with the same purpose as the lives of the saints. Those, having

a general tendency to enhance as much as possible the glory of their hero, were nothing more than panegyric. Monastic chronicles and annals were not free from this tendency, and often begin with an account of the life of the saint who founded the abbey, concerning themselves more with asceticism than with historical facts and events, which would be of much value to us today. In conclusion, the first part of these chronicles, written for the most part since the eleventh century, almost always recount legends, often based on oral tradition, but sometimes invented for the purpose of embellishing the early history of the monastery, and of *thus increasing the devotion of the faithful.* . . . Chronology especially was often treated carelessly." (*CE.* i, 531–536, *passim.*)

With respect to literature and history we have thus a millennial blank of Christian achievement: but the Church's *forte* was Science, for "the Church fosters and promotes the sciences in many ways,"—so long as they do not contradict the "sacred science of Christianity." This we may see exemplified in the following clerical summarization:

"Speculations concerning the rotundity of the earth and the possible existence of human beings 'with their feet turned towards ours,' were of interest to the Fathers of the early Church *only in so far as they seemed to encroach upon the fundamental Christian dogma* of the unity of the human race, and the consequent universality of *original sin and redemption.* This is clearly seen from the following passage of St. Augustine (*De Civitate Dei,* xvi, 9): '. . . For Scripture, which confirms the truth of its historical statements by the accomplishment of its prophecies, teaches no falsehood; and it is too absurd to say . . . there is a race of human beings not descended from that one first man.' This opinion of St. Augustine was commonly held *until the progress of science* . . . dissipated the scruples arising from a defective knowledge of geography. A *singular exception* occurs to us in the middle of the eighth century. From a letter of Pope St. Zachary (1 May, 748), addressed to St. Boniface, we learn that the great Apostle of Germany had invoked the papal censure upon Vergilius. Among other alleged misdeeds and errors was numbered that of holding 'that beneath the earth there was another world and other men, another sun and moon.' In reply, the Pope directs St. Boniface to convoke a council and, 'if it be made clear' that Vergilius adheres to

this 'perverse teaching, contrary to the Lord and to his own soul,' to 'expel him from the Church, deprived of his priestly dignity'! This is the only information that we possess regarding an incident which is made to figure largely in the *imaginary warfare* between theology and science. . . . The case of the Irish monk who suffered the penalty of *being several centuries ahead of his age* remains on the page of history, like the parallel case of Galileo, as a solemn admonition against a hasty resort to ecclesiastical censure," as *CE.* naïvely remarks. (*CE.* i, 581–2.)

Summing up the vivifying cultural achievements of over a thousand years down to the beginning of the end of the regimen of Church embrutishment of men, this ludicrous composite of confession of debasement and self-laudation greets us: "The Middle Ages did not bequeath to Rome any institutions that could be called scientific or literary academies. As a rule, there was slight inclination for such institutions. . . . A special reason why literature did not get a stronger foothold at Rome is to be found in *the constant politico-religious* disturbances of the Middle Ages. . . . Medieval Rome was certainly no place for learned academies. . . . From the earliest days of the Renaissance *the Church was the highest type of such an academy,* that is, *of the broadest kind of culture"!* (*CE.* i, 83, 84.) Yet despite this highest type of academy as was the Church, the broadest kind of culture which it personified and radiated, the full splendor of the Renaissance had been reacting upon and illuming the Church for two or three centuries, when we discover this amazing lack of clerical learning and intelligence confessed by the Church. The Protestant heresy was at its zenith; in 1559–74 the Protestants published an Ecclesiastical History called "Centuriators," in thirteen volumes, "showing century by century, how far the Catholic Church had departed from primitive teaching and practices," as *CE.* describes it. This heretic work caused "keen distress and dismay in Catholic circles; and provided the Reformers with a formidable weapon of attack on the Catholic Church. It did much harm. The feasability of a counter-attack appealed to Catholic scholars, but nothing adequate was provided, *for the science of history was still a thing of the future.* Its founder was as yet but 21 years of age"—Baronius, later Cardinal. He studied hard, and later produced his *Annales,* 12 volumes, "which he had foreseen in a vision would be

the term of his work," and by which the "Centuries were eclipsed,"—but in which he ruthlessly destroyed by sane and fearless criticism so many thousands of Church saint-and-martyr myths, that "the Annals were condemned by the Spanish Inquisition" (*CE.* ii, 305, 306).

Such was the net—and *gross* result of fifteen hundred years of the much-boasted zeal for learning and teaching of the Divinely-appointed sole Teacher of Christendom, in the broad fields of historical knowledge, literature, and general intellectual culture. In the grand realm of the Sciences, which the Church has ever cherished and encouraged, may we hope for bigger and better results?

CHRISTIAN "SCIENCE"

"The Church, far from hindering the pursuit of the sciences, fosters and promotes them in many ways." (*CE.* xiii, 609.)

"When a *dogma contradicts a scientific assertion, the latter has to be revised*"! (*CE.* xiii, 607.)

The Middle Ages, as generally understood, "is a term used to designate that period of European history between the Fall of the Roman Empire and about the middle of the fifteenth century," (*CE.* x, 235), —the era of the discovery of printing,—a full thousand years. The highly significant and evidently unstudied explanation is made: "The Middle Ages have become *an interlude, clearly bounded on both extremities by a more civilized or humane idea of life,* which men are endeavouring to realize in politics, education, manners, literature, and religion." (*CE.* xii, 765.) Those two clearly bounded extremities are the Pagan civilization of the dying Roman Empire and the secular, skeptical, rationalistic "Renaissance of Knowledge," which *CE.* clerically complains embodied "the ideas and spirit of classic paganism." (i, 34.) We have just seen that during this Millennium "thoroughly saturated with Christianity" there was, in Christendom, no literature, other than theological treatises, monkish chronicles and Saint-tales, and no science of whatever category,—except "sacred science" or theology: "Theology is the very science of faith itself" (*CE.* xiii, 598); and we have seen to what intellectual status that sacred science led the human mind. The zeal with which the Church pursued its propagation of the Faith as the central feature of its educational system,

with all other branches of human knowledge as an indifferent "side line," we have noted, in the language of the ecclesiastical scientists. The Church maintains that it "fosters and promotes sciences *in many ways*," and inferentially always has encouraged and protected science in all its manifold forms of utilitarian humanism. But Holy Church has some naïve notions of science and of the ecclesiastical limitations imposed upon it. While thus fostering and promoting the sciences, "Yet," says *CE.*, "while acknowledging the freedom due to them, she tries *to preserve them from falling into errors contrary to Divine doctrine,* and from overstepping their boundaries and *throwing into confusion matters that belong to the domain* of faith"! (*Vatican Decrees,* Sess. III, De Fide, ch. 4; *CE.* xiii, 609.)

The priestly principle of the subordination of scientific fact to dogmatic faith is thus naïvely posed:

"Science is limited by truth, which belongs to its very essence. Should science ever have to choose between truth and freedom (a choice not at all imaginary), it must under all circumstances decide for truth, under the penalty of self-extermination. . . . Ethics is more important for mankind than science. Those who believe in revelation, know that the Commandments are the criteria by which men will be judged. (Matt. xxv, 35–46.) . . .

"The demand for unlimited freedom in science is unreasonable and unjust, because it leads to license and rebellion. . . . To submit one's understanding to a doctrine *supposed*—[is that all?]—to be Divine and *guaranteed to be infallible* is undoubtedly more consistent than to accept prevailing postulates of science. . . .

"When a clearly defined dogma contradicts a scientific assertion, THE LATTER HAS TO BE REVISED"! (*CE.* xiii, 598–607, *passim.*)

Than this last sentence, a more palpable and ridiculous untruth has never been uttered by the clerical Liars of the Lord. No single scientific fact ever discovered and proclaimed, in all the struggling history of Science in defiance of Church, has ever been "revised," altered or withdrawn in deference to religious Dogma. Every fact of science has proudly and triumphantly defied and refuted Dogma and Church, and made them both cheap and ridiculous. Faith hates facts; they are forever divorced on grounds of congenital incompatibility. The Church, True Church, and Protestant, has screamed and reviled at every truth of Science which was ever discovered; with high priestly

anathema, the curse of God, with prison, rack, and stake, it has sought to suppress and kill every thought of the human mind, every bold thinker, whose truths for the benefit of mankind have contradicted and ridiculed it and its holy dogmas. Every single one; I challenge the production of a solitary instance of exception. The catalogue is too vast to even summarize here; for details and proofs the monumental works of Dr. Andrew D. White, *The Warfare between Science and Theology*, and Dr. John W. Draper's *Conflict between Science and Religion*,—(the latter on the Church's *Index of Prohibited Books*), may be profitably consulted and are cheerfully recommended in refutation of this example of priestly mendacity. We have read what happened to that "singular exception," the Irish monk Bishop Vergilius.

But let the false pretense be exposed by a few examples given by the American apologist for "the Holy See, deservedly known as the nursing mother of schools and universities," such as we have above admired. Until these "universities" began, about the year 1211 (*CE.* xii, 766) of the Christian epoch, no one had dared to think; Christendom was too steeped in ignorance and credulity to think. These Middle Ages, says *CE.* (xii, 38), were "a civilization thoroughly saturated with Christianity," and herefore incapable of scientific thought or feeling. "All Greek learning [had been] lost for a thousand years in Western Christendom. . . . The loss of Greek authors and the decline of Church Latin [as well as the Latin Church] into *barbarism* were misfortunes *in a universal ruin.*" (*CE.* xii, 765.) But men's minds could not forever be kept in the chains of priestly dominance; Gulliver began to wake and rouse and to struggle against the multiplied strands of theological cobwebs with which the Lilliputs of Faith had fast bound him while in his millennial sleep of the Christian Dark Ages of Faith. "Under these circumstances," admits *CE.*, "a revival of learning so soon as the West was *capable of it*, might have been foreseen." (*CE.* xxi, 765.) The Church was keen and hostile, and did forsee what was coming. The first University was founded in 1211; in identically that time the Holy Inquisition was established by His Holiness Innocent III to guard against heretics and "other innovators." "The taking of Constantinople in 1204, the introduction of Arabian, Jewish, and Greek works into the Christian schools, the rise of the universities—

these are the events which led to the extraordinary intellectual activity of the thirteenth century. . . . Even in the Christian schools there were declared Pantheists . . . who bade fair to prejudice the cause of Aristotelianism. These developments *were suppressed by the most stringent disciplinary measures* during the first few decades of the thirteenth century. . . . Roger Bacon demonstrated by his *unsuccessful attempts to develop the natural sciences* the possibilities of another kind which were latent in Aristotelianism." (*CE.* xiii, 548, 549.)

Roger Bacon (1214–1294), the "Doctor Mirabilis," whose "attempts to develop the natural sciences" were so drastically suppressed, was the genius of the dawning "Revival of Learning"—the Renaissance. He wrote over eighty books, a number of the most important in a secret cryptogram for fear of the ecclesiastical consequences—which he finally suffered. "It is in these treatises that Bacon speaks of the reflection of light, mirages, burning-mirrors, of the diameters of the celestial bodies and their distances from one another, of their conjunction and eclipses; that he explains the laws of ebb and flow, proves the Julian calendar to be wrong; he explains the composition and effects of gunpowder, discusses and affirms the possibility of steam-vessels and äerostats, of microscopes and telescopes, and some other inventions made many centuries later. . . . 'Pope Nicholas IV, on the advice of many brethren condemned and rejected the doctrine of the English brother Roger Bacon, Doctor of Divinity, which contains many *suspect innovations*, by reason of which Roger was imprisoned' 12 or 14 years" (*CE.* xiii, 112), until death released him from the strangling clutches of the "nursing-mother of schools and Universities,"—which always "encourages Science"!

Roger's great German contemporary "Blessed Albertus Magnus" (c. 1206–1280), was "accused of magic and of neglecting the sacred sciences. . . . Albert respected authority and traditions, was *prudent* in proposing the results of his investigations. . . . sometimes he hesitates and *does not express* his own opinion, probably *because he feared* that his theories, which were *'advanced' for those times*—[when Church was "far from hindering the pursuit of the sciences"],—would excite surprise and occasion unfavorable comment." Among the products of his "magic," Blessed Albert "gives an elaborate demon-

stration of the sphericity of the earth. . . . *More important* than Albert's development of the physical sciences was his influence on the study of philosophy and *theology*. . . . 'All *inferior* (*i. e.* natural) *sciences should be servants* (ancellae) *of Theology, which is superior and the mistress*' (Aquinas)." (*CE.* i, 265–6.) Thus the Church thwarted and prevented what would have been the much earlier "triumph of scientific discovery, with which, as a rule, . . . the seats of academic authority had too little sympathy." (*CE.* xiii, 549.)

The criminal ignorance and bigotry of the Church are nowhere more convictingly evident than in its repression of medical science through the ages when pestilence and plague swept unchecked through Christendom, while holy priests and monks chanted litanies and scared devils as the sole means of staying the ravages of Disease and Death. Listen to the same old story: "Modern medical science rests upon a Greek foundation. . . . The secret of the immortality of Hippocrates rests on the fact that he pointed out the means whereby medicine became a science. . . . Hippocratic medical science celebrated its renascence in the eighteenth century. . . . Arabian medical science forms an important chapter in the history of the development of medicine, [largely] because it preserved Greek medical science. . . . With the decline of Arabian rule—[and Christian rise, in Spain]—began the decay of medicine. . . . In 1085 Toledo was taken from the Moors, and Spain became the transmitter of Arabian medicine." Here comes in the first medical scientist to defy the Church and escape its Holy Inquisition. Vesalius (born 1511), became physician to the Emperor Charles V; "his eagerness to learn went so far that he stole corpses from the gallows to work on at night in his room. . . . The supreme service of Vesalius is that he *for the first time* [in 1500 years of Church cherishing of Science], with information derived from the direct study of the dead body, attacked with keen criticism the hitherto unassailable Galen, and thus brought about its overthrow. Vesalius is the *founder* of scientific anatomy and of the technique of modern dissection. Unfortunately, he himself *destroyed a part of his manuscripts* on learning that his enemies intended to *submit his work to ecclesiastical censure*"! (*CE.* x, 123–130, *passim.*) Indeed, "at that era a scholar . . . who generally struck out so many new ideas in opposition to the commonly held opinion, could easily be accused of *heresy*.

So many of his relations with Protestant scholars appeared suspicious. . . . Personally *he avoided expressing his opinion, in order not to fall under suspicion of heresy*"! (*CE.* xv, 379.) In defiance of the ban of the Holy Ghost on dissection and anatomy, Vesalius dissected the stolen corpses: his work disproved the Luz, or "Resurrection Bone," the nucleus of the heavenly restoration of the human body, and disclosed that Adam's missing rib, lost since Eve was carved from it some 4500 years previously, was still there. These impious refutations of the Church's sacred science so enraged the clerical savants that it required all the efforts of the Emperor to save his great physician from the Dogs of the Lord and the Holy Inquisition.

A word only may be added on the highly significant question of hospitals and asylums in the Ages of Faith. "The idealism of medieval theological beliefs led to the founding of orphan asylums and hospitals. But the impracticability and 'other-worldliness' of the Middle Ages prevented effective treatment of the diseases of the inmates. Such hospitals were merely dark, crowded, and unsanitary places of refuge for the needy and sick, who received no rational medical attention. . . . The Middle Ages, which some profess to admire, were in reality times of low civilization." For a shocking account of the hospitals, lying-in dens and insane pens of medieval Christian idealism, reference must be made to Dr. Henry W. Haggard's *Devils, Drugs and Doctors;* (cf. *CE.* vii, 492; x, 125). Such as these miserable lazzaretti were, they were for the superstitious Faithful only: "The bigoted Pius V actually directed that no medical assistance should be given to any person who declined spiritual attendance"! (Macauley, *Const. Essays; Church and State,* p. 136.)

But for the benighted theological repression of thought and of discovery of the secrets and powers of Nature, here barely hinted, the germs of modern science and invention which lay latent and struggling in the fertile minds of these great pioneers, would have quickly developed and would have recreated civilization and enriched humanity centuries before they did, when Holy Church got too feeble and discredited longer to enchain the minds of men. But, as it was, the "sacred science of Christianity" must be protected by force and proscription against the facts and knowledge of Nature and the quickening minds of men. To guard its precious Bible "revelations," the Church upheld

the Bible and forced all men to close their minds when they opened its sacred pages. At last, Galileo fitted two bits of glass into an old Church organ-pipe, poked it at the "firmament of heaven" which had cost Jehovah a whole day's work, and, Lo! the whole of the "sacred science" of the Church collapsed into universal ruin! The truth of God's revelation became an exploded myth, and its inspired Bible a book of Fable. The holy Church screeched in terror its unholy anathemas. "What, more than all," confesses the *CE.*, "raised alarm [over the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo], was *anxiety for the credit of Holy Scripture, the letter of which was then universally believed to be the supreme authority in matters of SCIENCE, as in all others.*" (*CE.* vi, 344.) The Church made monstrous efforts to murder the new thought: "we know from the calendar of saints and other sources *how much had been done to check the wild license of thought and speech* in the Peninsula. Giordano Bruno, *renegade* and pantheist, was *burnt* in 1600; Campanella spent [27] long years in prison. The different measures meted out to Copernicus by Clement VII and to Galileo by Paul V *need no comment* [its shame chokes the Church]! The papacy aimed henceforth at becoming an 'ideal government under spiritual and converted men.'" (*CE.* xii, 768.) The Church missed this aim; but with the unholy aid of its Holy Inquisition, which in 1542 it declared to be "the supreme tribunal for the whole world" (*CE.* xiii, 137), and its sacred "Index of Prohibited Books," instituted in 1557, it murdered men and thought for yet several centuries. The up-to-date edition of 1929 closes the minds of the "Faithful" to over 5,000 books of the highest intellectual merit,—as partially catalogued in the news dispatches. (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* Nov. 11, and Dec. 1, 1930). This precious Proscription for preserving the "*purity and genuineness of her Apostolic doctrine*" intact for the "*guileless and innocent hearts*" of the Babes of Faith, and to prevent them from learning anything which might put them "on inquiry" as to the "purity and genuineness" of these holy "Apostolic" myths, includes the immortal works of Gibbon, Sterne, Dumas, Victor Hugo, our own Dr. Draper, Anatole France, La Fontaine, Lamartine, Balzac, Rousseau, Steele, Addison, Talleyrand, Henry Hallam, Voltaire, Zola, Maeterlinck,—(this my Book will probably be added by special Decree);—in a word every book by—(mine excluded)—the brilliant and fearless

thinkers of the world who have scorned Holy Church, and have been laureated by winning inclusion in this Holy Index of Inspired Ignorance. It is a vain and foolish gesture of Bigotry, defeating its own malicious purpose: "Prohibited Books illuminate the world; words suppressed or condemned are repeated from one end of the world to the other," as Emerson admirably has expressed. But no wonder that "a [Faithful] Christian child knows more of the important truths [of a certain brand] than did Kant, Herbert Spencer, or Huxley," as is the "sour grapes" sneer of *CE.* (xiii, 607) at those whose minds are free to seek and find the truths of Nature and work from them true Miracles of Science for the boundless benefit of Man.

This enlightened *Index*, established at the behest of the Holy Ghost for keeping men ignorant, dates from the foundation of the Faith; it deserves a word of admiration, which may be spoken by its learned apologist: "Before the art of printing was discovered, it sufficed to *burn* a few manuscript copies *to prevent the spreading of a doctrine.* So it was done at Ephesus in the presence of St. Paul (Acts xix, 19). It is known that the other Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, and the Council of Nice (325) exercised the same authority; [citing] the various censures, prohibitions, and indexes issued by cities, universities, bishops, provincial councils, and popes, through the Christian centuries." (*CE.* xiii, 607.) Who wonders that they were "The Dark Ages"?

With the final childish, senile sneer of the Church we will dismiss this phase of examination of the paralyzing efficiency of Faith. Says our guardian of the archaic fossils embedded in the Rock of Faith: "It is true, the *believer is less free* in his knowledge than the unbeliever, but only *because he* [which one?] *knows more.* Hence it is, that a well-instructed *Christian child knows more* of the important truths than did Kant, Herbert Spencer, or Huxley. Believing scientists—[a self-stultification] do not wish to be free-thinkers *just as respectable people do not wish to be vagabonds*"! (*CE.* xiii, 607.)

So be it! But the vagabonds of *Free Thought* are those who, at infinite cost of torture and blood, through all the centuries of Creed and Crime of the Church, and in heroic scorn of the Church and her "sacred science," have made our dearly-earned civilization what even it is today. Step by step, from contest to ultimate conquest, in every single

conflict of Fact with Faith, the Church has been defeated and has retreated—put to shaming rout. It has been a slow and tortuous progress,—

> "For faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast
> To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last"!

But fantastic Faith has wondrous powers of "accommodation" and specious tenacity of false pretense of being forever inspiredly right. The process of adjustment has throughout a thousand instances been the same: Faith is confronted with a discrediting Fact; it curses it and denies it. When the fact is crammed down its throat and it is forced to recognize it, it lyingly denies that it had ever denied it. Then when all mankind has united in joyful acceptance of the new fact, the arch hypocrite declares that it is entirely in accord with its "sacred science," and tries to steal all credit for it as one of its very own grand contributions to "Christian civilization," and sanctimoniously wheezes, "How much grander a concept it gives of the infinite knowledge and glory of Gawd in His wonderful process of Nature"! Oh, Hypocrisy! Thou art the Church of God! "*Semper eadem*"—lying and shameless!

A thrilling retrospect, and inspirational look into the Future, are thus expressed: "It is to scientific devotion more than to any other cause that man owes his present position on a new earth and under new heavens. Nothing else has so immeasurably enlarged his conception. Everywhere his experiments have opened up stretches of infinity . . . Personified Science might indeed be proud to have begun so humbly and to have achieved so much. By the use of her method men have weighed the planets as in scales, they have read the secrets of the animal and vegetable world. They have discovered 'what is in man,' not wholly, but in some large and wonderful degree. Instead of the burnt-out lamp of dogmatism Science has given to humanity 'the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' In an effort to minimize drudgery and misery her great discoveries have attained to concrete availability in useful arts that have remade the world and increased immeasurably the comfort of men and their joy. . . . Scientific devotion has broadened the horizon of man at every step. In the course of time humanity must leave the shrines of its cherished idols behind

and push steadily on! Sensing the poetic nature of this truth, James Russell Lowell spoke in verse to those of his fellow men who could understand:

> 'New times demand new measures and new men;
> The world advances, and in time outgrows
> The laws which in our father's times were best;
> And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
> Will be shaped out by wiser men then we,
> Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.' " . . .

(Dr. Ernest R. Trattner: *The Autobiography of God*, pp. 289 *et seq.*, *passim.* Scribner's; 1930. Cf. *Science Remaking the World:* Caldwell and Slosson; Doubleday, Page; 1924; *Two Thousand Years of Science:* Harvey-Gibson; Macmillan; 1929).

In glorious contrast to the murderous principles and practices of Faith—

> "Reason did never sentence or condemn
> Faith to the torture. Freedom all she claims
> For larger understanding of her aims;
> Hers no evasion, sleight, or stratagem,
> But only fearless quest our ignorance to stem."

THE REBIRTH OF CIVILIZATION

Gulliver Awakes

"The RENAISSANCE—the achievements of the modern spirit in opposition to the spirit which prevailed during the Middle Ages"! (*CE.* xii. 765.)

During the Dark Ages of Faith men were born into the world with the same capacities and potentialities of intellect as were the Sages of Greece and the Jurisconsults and Statesmen of Rome. The poles are not farther apart, however, day and night not more different in volume of light, than the pre-Christian and Christian eras in point of intellectual product. Why so vast a difference? Simply—that the pre-Christian mind was free, and explored unfettered and unafraid the boundless zones of Nature, in search of the Supreme Good and the practical benefits to be wrung from the world in which Pagan man lived for the benefit of himself and of his kind: while the Christian mind

was bound by what it regarded as revealed Truth and shackled by theology and priestcraft, which closed every highway and bypath of approach to Nature with the warning sign: "No Thoroughfare. Moses." "When one has once believed, search should cease," as Father Tertullian said. The ban of Eden— "Of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge thou shalt not eat," was enforced by the Priest by ecclesiastical censorship and burning of books, by the Inquisition of Faith, the Index, the rack, the stake. The ingrained aim and end of Man was Heaven; for that other-worldly destiny alone was he taught and trained; that was the whole Christian scheme of education and outlook on life; the things of this world were contemned and ignored.

Through these Ages of Faith two careers only were open to men— priestcraft and military. With rarest exception only clerical persons could read or write; the great masses of the peoples were utterly illiterate, ignorant, superstitious, devout slaves of priestcraft; their civil status serfs; they lived in filth and squalor unbelievable, wearing their coarse fabric or leathern garments until they rotted off their unwashed bodies, the victims of disease, plagues and famines which often killed off near half the population, and aided by wars and rapine incessant, greatly incited and waged by the political Church to further its corrupt greed and ambition, keep the squalid population of Europe at a standstill, so that it took a century to double the miserable masses, fed on black rye bread and slops, and on lying saint-tales, martyr-myths and forged relics for increase of stupid and credulous devotion to its faithless Faith and Priests, the while they were brutalized and kept savage by the almost daily free spectacles furnished by Holy Church of public torturings and burnings by slow priest-set fires of countless heroic men and women who were unafraid to despise and defy the priests. Faith thus flourished on ignorance and credulity, which the Church diligently fostered and exploited for its unholy purposes of wealth and power, of rule by ruin. As none but priests could read and write, while kings and public men were mere soldiers and illiterates, and public business must be carried on through written documents, the public offices of State, from the King's chancellor and ambassadors to the lowliest clerks, were priests, and thus Priestcraft and Church increased their sinister power and dominance and wealth. These facts explain the sinister motive of the priestly monopoly of literacy, and

fully account for the crass ignorance of Christendom which the vaunted Teaching Mission of the Church entailed.

"BENEFIT OF CLERGY"

For a long dark span of centuries Holy Church, as sole and unique, Divinely inspired and guided Teacher of Christendom, plied the gentle art of Pedagogy for the Faithful. The net result of the intellectual efforts of the Inspired Teacher may be summed up and made luminous by a couple of descriptions of the wonderful "benefit of clergy" as a Teaching Institution. Says first Dr. James Harvey Robinson: "For six or seven centuries after the overthrow of the Roman government in the West [476], very few outside of the clergy ever dreamed of studying, or even of learning to read and write. Even in the Thirteenth Century an offender who wished to prove that he belonged to the clergy in order that he might be tried by a church court, had only to show that he could read a single line; for it was assumed by the judges that no one unconnected with the church could read at all. It was therefore inevitable that all the teachers were clergymen, that almost all the books were written by priests and monks, and that the clergy was the ruling power in all intellectual, artistic, and literary matters—the chief guardians and promoters of civilization. Moreover, the civil government was forced to rely upon churchmen to write out the public documents and proclamations. The priests and monks held the pen for the king. Representatives of the clergy sat in the king's councils and acted as his ministers; in fact, the conduct of government largely devolved upon them." (Robinson, *The Ordeal of Civilization*, pp. 157–8.) This "benefit of clergy," in the legal sense in which it is above used, and the degraded state of ignorance which gave occasion for it and the presumptions of the clergy enforcing it, are defined and explained by the clergy: "Benefit of Clergy.—The exemption from the jurisdiction of the secular courts, which . . . was accorded to clergymen. . . . When a clerk was brought before a court, he proved his claim to benefit of clergy by reading, and he was turned over to the ecclesiastical court, *as only the clergy were generally able to read.* This gave rise to the extension of the benefit of clergy to all who could read. [It is added, for historical interest]: The privilege of benefit of

clergy was entirely abolished in England in 1827. In the Colonies it had been recognized, but by Act of Congress of 30 April, 1790, it was taken away in the Federal courts of the United States. Traces of it are found in some courts of different States, but it has been practically outlawed by statutes or by adjudication." (*CE.* ii, 446–7.) All this serves to confirm the truth of the statement, that the Church and the clergy imposed and perpetuated Ignorance as the basis of their sordid greed for power and control over the Ignorant.

THE CRIMINAL CRUSADES STARTED THE REVOLT

But—for a wonder under such conditions, and after a thousand years, a slow but portentous change began to manifest itself in sodden Christendom. Note this pregnant statement: "Up to this time (1250) *almost wholly absorbed in the supernatural,* [men now] took more interest in worldly things. Unconditional renunciation of the world came to an end, and men grew more matter-of-fact and practical." (*CE.* vi, 493.) As the result of this "extraordinary change . . . *education found its way among laymen,* and it developed trade." (*Ib.*) This confirms the fact that only priests could read and write or had any sort of "education," in all those Church-taught ages when "scholar and priest meant one and the same thing." Indeed, it is stated: "Only the clergy were generally able to read." (*CE.* ii, 446.) About that time it was that the feeling of nationality first began to stir in minds of civil rulers and of people able to realize the imperial schemes of Holy Church for one great Empire under the rule of the Vicar of God.

To forestall and check this dangerous restlessness of peoples, Kings, and nascent nationality, the Church devised that since time-honored scheme of joining restless factions in war on some common enemy, thus to avert domestic difficulties: here was born the gigantic folly and crime of the Crusades, for the pretended rescue of the empty and apocryphal "Sepluchre of Christ from the Infidel." This titanic scheme and its purposes are naïvely thus confessed: "The idea of the Crusades corresponds to a *political* conception which was realized in Christendom only from the eleventh to the fifteenth century: this sup-

poses *a union of all peoples and sovereigns under the direction of the popes.* . . . The history of the Crusades is therefore intimately connected with that of the popes and the Church. These Holy Wars were essentially a papal enterprise. The idea of quelling all dissensions among Christians, of uniting them under the same standard and sending them forth against the Mohammedans was conceived in the eleventh century, at a time when there were as yet no organized states in Europe." (*CE.* iv, 543, 556.) A more gigantic crime and overwhelming failure of ambitious design was probably never recorded in history. But far different and more transcendent results for civilization were brought about. Indeed, the Crusades were the beginning of European civilization. Says *CE.:* "The Crusades brought about results of which the popes had never dreamed, and which were perhaps the most important of all. They reëstablished traffic between the East and West which, after having been suspended for several centuries, was then resumed with even greater energy; they were the means of bringing from the depths of their respective provinces and introducing into *the most civilized Asiatic countries* Western knights, to whom *a new world was thus revealed, and who returned to their native land filled with novel ideas.* . . . Moreover, as early as the end of the twelfth century, *the development of general culture was the direct result* of these Holy Wars. . . . If, indeed, the Christian civilization of Europe has become universal culture, in the highest sense, *the glory redounds, in no small measure, to the Crusades"!* (*CE.* iv, 556.) "The original aim of the Crusades, it is true, was not attained. But the civilization of Western Europe gained from the Orient the best the East had to give and thus was greatly aided in its development" (*CE.* v, 612). The yet quasi-barbarian rulers and rabbles of Christendom were thus brought into direct contact with a real civilization; had their first glimpse of Arabian culture and civilized refinements of life, saw the men with whom they were in deadly conflict who were vastly their superiors in every ideal and practical accomplishment, and infinitely more humane. One instance will illustrate the difference between Christian brutality and Moslem humanity. When the Christian Crusaders of Christ captured Jerusalem in 1099 and rushed in to rescue the tomb of their dead God from the Infidel, the streets of the Holy City ran with human blood up to the horses' bridles; "the Christians entered Jerusalem from all

sides [July 15, 1099] and *slew its inhabitants regardless of age or sex*"! (*CE.* iv, 547.) When nearly a century later (September 17, 1187), Saladin and his "Infidel hosts" recaptured the City and overthrew the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, not a murder nor act of violence or outrage was committed on the inhabitants, and the murderous hordes of Christ were allowed to depart in peace. The Christians began to learn what civilization was. Thus "the Crusades—those magnificent expeditions which, inspired and supported by the Church, brought huge masses of people into contact with the Orient. . . . They were the means of spreading . . . the theories and methods of *Arabian scholarship, at that time quite advanced,* and thereby placing the researches of Western scholars *on entirely new bases,* and *putting before them new aims and objects.*" (*CE.* vi, 448.) An immense confession of Christian failure!

THE "INFIDEL" REDEEMS CHRISTENDOM

As very pertinent to an understanding of the Rebirth of Learning, a paragraph will be devoted to a summary notice of Arabian culture and its saving influence on Christian ignorance; for it was the Arabs who brought learning, literature and science to benighted Christendom and created the Renaissance which ended the Dark Ages of Faith.

"When the Arabs came in contact with other civilizations (in the eighth century), notably with that of Persia, their speculative and scientific activities were stimulated into action. About A. D. 750 the Abassides, an enlightened line of Caliphs, came to the throne, who encouraged learning, and patronized the representatives of foreign culture. . . . They made ample use of Greek philosophy, and in their free inquiries into the secrets of nature, in which they soon outstripped the Greeks themselves, *they paid little attention to the precepts of the Koran.* . . . The Arabians translated [the works of Plato, Galen, and Aristotle]. . . . The Arabians developed Greek philosophy in its relation to *medicine, and in this regard they exerted the most far-reaching influence in Europe.* . . . The Arabian philosophy, as is well known, exercised a profound influence on the Scholastic philosophy of the twelfth and succeeding centuries." (*CE.* i, 675–6.) "The Arabian conquerors had learned from the Syrians the arts and sciences

of the Greek world. They became especially proficient in medicine, mathematics, and philosophy, for the study of which they erected in every part of their domain schools and libraries. In the *twelfth* century —[the first Christians ones were in the *thirteenth*]—Moorish Spain had nineteen colleges, and their renown attracted hundreds of Christian scholars from every part of Europe. *Herein lay a grave menace to Christian orthodoxy.*

"The BIBLE had been set up *as an infallible source of knowledge* not only in matters of religion, but of *history, chronology, and physical science. The result was a reaction against the very essentials of Christianity.* . . . Biblical chronology, as then [*19th* century] understood, and the literal historic interpretation of the Book of Genesis were *thrown into confusion by the advancing sciences*—astronomy, with its grand nebular hypothesis; biology, with its even more fruitful theory of evolution; geology, and pre-historic archaeology. . . . But able apologists were forthcoming to assay a *conciliation of science and religion*"! (*CE.* i, 621, 622.) Be it noted, that it was not until late nineteenth century, when natural Science had made the "sacred science" of the Bible ridiculous, that the "conciliators" came forth with the Big False Pretense that "the Holy Bible was never intended as a Book of Science, but only of moral and religious edification"! Why then, one wonders, does Holy Bible teach "Science"—abound in what is—though false and ridiculous—essentially teachings of "science": *e. g.* the origin and form of the earth, and its fixity in space at the center of the universe as the "footstool of God"; the position and movements of sun and stars in the phony "firmament of heaven"; the origin and "Fall of Man" and the "special creation" of animals; the geographical absurdities of the Garden of Eden and its Four Rivers, the Flood and the Divine original and purpose of the Rainbow; the differentiation of languages at Babel; the cause of disease as the reactions to malignant devils in the inner works of men, and the Divine prescriptions for cure of the "Great Physician," the "Lord who healeth thee," by spit-salve, prayers of faith, ointment, holy water, and devil-exorcism by ignorant priests? If the Holy Ghost of God wrote or inspired the Bible, funny it is that It talked such foolishness, which was exactly what ignorant priests would have written out of the ignorance and superstitions of their times, without any inspiration of God

to confirm them in the nonsense. If the All-Wise God who dictated the Blessed Bible and its foolish "science falsely so called," had just spoken the facts of his own divine Creation, truthfully,—had just once said that the earth is round instead of flat, and revolves on its axis and around the sun instead of standing still while the sun went around it; that disease is caused by dirt and germs instead of by devils; and had given sensible precepts of prophylaxis and of cure; in a word, had "revealed" out of his supposed Infinite Wisdom some of the things which are just now, after some thousands of years of Bible-worship and bloody Church-repression, being painfully and dearly worked out by heroic human effort,—Who would not gladly and proudly hail the "Holy Bible, Book Divine," and for a certainty know that it was truly the intellectual work of a God? But! The priests and the parsons pretend yet that it is Divine; men of science and the coming generation know that it is ignorant priestly Imposture.

But to return to the Arabs, who "in their free inquiries into the secrets of Nature paid little attention to the precepts of the Koran," and were destined to "throw into confusion" the "sacred science" of the Blessed Bible. "It cannot be exactly said when the first translations of Arabic writings began to be received by the Christians of the West: probably about 1000. In the beginning of the twelfth century the contributions of Mohammedan science and philosophy to Latin Christendom became more and more frequent and important. . . . About 1134 John of Luna translated Al-Fergani's treatise 'Astronomy,' which was an abridgement of Ptolemy's 'Almagest,' thereby introducing Christians to the Ptolemaic system,"—followed by a page of other Arabian works translated for the Christians. (*CE.* xii, 49; cf. *ib.* xv, 184.) Thus Christendom got even its grand fable of the earth as the center of the universe from the Greek Ptolemy through the Arabs,—and damned Copernicus and martyred Galileo for daring to disprove it. "In 1085 Toledo was taken from the Moors, and Spain became the transmitter of Arabian medicine." (*CE.* x, 130.) Gerard of Cremona (died 1187), "a twelfth century student of Arabic science and translator from Arabic into Latin, went to Toledo, and soon acquired a great proficiency in Arabic; he translated not only the 'Almagest,' but also the entire works of Avicenna, into Latin; he translated 76 books from Arabic into Latin. His activities, and that of a group of

men who formed a regular college of translators at Toledo, *brought the world of Arabian learning within reach of the scholars of Latin Christendom*, and prepared the way for that conflict of ideas out of which sprang the Scholasticism of the thirteenth century." (*CE.* vi, 468.) At this late period of Christian intellectual awakening, now for the first time "Aristotle's philosophy was finding its way through Moorish and Jewish channels into the Christian schools of Europe." (*CE.* vi, 555.) Even "the compass was invented in the East and brought to Europe by the Arabs." (*CE.* i, 379.) And so of scores of inventions and branches of learning which were known to and cultivated by the Infidel Arabs, which through them became elements of the slow civilizing of quasi-barbarian Christendom so long under the divine tutelage of Holy Church and the priests.

Thus Christendom had wallowed through a thousand years of Christian ignorance until it was awakened by the shock of contact with Arabic civilization and learning through the Crusades. Then, slowly and dangerously, "as might have been foreseen, a revival of learning, *so soon as the West was capable of it*," occurred. (*CE.* xii, 765.) One can only wonder why the Christian West, instructed by God's own Teacher, was not sooner *capable* of learning anything but monkish lore or religious lies. The Church apologizes, that "the Middle Ages occupy those tumultuous years when barbarians turned Christians were learning slowly to be civilized, from 476 [the end of the Roman Empire] to 1400." (*CE.* xii, 765.) But, the Eastern Empire, dominated by the original "Orthodox" Eastern Catholic Church, was never "overthrown by the barbarians," but remained in quiet and undisputed possession of its Faith and "Christian Civilization"; but its whole history is almost as foul and besotted, blood-reddened and Christian-barbarous as the Western Empire. And, since the closing of the Pagan schools in 529 at Christian behest, "the Church had no rival" as sole and inspired civilizer and instructor of Christendom. The poor Arabs were at that time disunited and ever-warring tribes of idolatrous barbarians, steeped in ignorance and "sin." Mohammed fled from their fury in the Great Hegira in 622; he died ten years later, in 632. Yet, in exactly 100 years, even before they were checked by the Christian Charles Martel at the battle of Tours in the heart of France, in the year 732, the Mohammedan Arabs became and remained the most

highly civilized people in the world, the masters of an illustrious Empire of far greater extent than Christendom,—and which embraced the greater part of Christendom; and millions of good Christians quickly dropped God and Christ and became worshippers of Allah and his Prophet Mohammed. A strange Providence of the Christian God! This leads to a moment's disposal of one of the most pretentious and specious clerical claims, that the "divinity" of the Christian religion is proved by its "miraculous spread and preservation."

THE "MIRACULOUS ATTESTATIONS" OF CHRISTIANITY

One of the Church's most precious platitudes is its oft-used plea of "the demonstration of the truth of Christianity based on the wonderful propagation of His religion." (*CE.* i, 621.) Starting with a handful of Galilean peasants, in three centuries, up to the time of Constantine, it claims to have been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Gal. i, 23), and to have won maybe a million or two out of the hundred millions of the Roman Empire. We have seen the mode and manner of "conversion" of very many of these comers to the Christ; as well as of the most dubious Christian efficacy of the hordes of "barbarians" later won by the missionary sword. This "rapid spread" and propagation of the Faith is a "triumphant proof of the divinity and truth of Christianity"! It is also a familiar and threadbare "proof," the "miraculous" persistence and preservation of the Christian religion through some nineteen centuries. If this be a proof, many "false" religions are even more divine and true; for the religions of Brahma, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, have existed and persisted, all for many centuries, some for a millennium, before Christianity, and ever since until now, and they embrace together countless millions more of devout worshippers than does Christianity. And we have seen the conditions of ignorance in which Christianity flourished and the terror by which it was preserved during the ages of Faith; and all world knows what the Church has become, and is faster becoming, with the advent and advance of the Age of Reason.

But if the slow and tortuous spread of Christianity by force and arms is proof of its "miraculous" character, what shall we say of

Mohammedanism? "Its uninterrupted spread, from the seventh century to the present time, among all the races of the continent, is *one of the most remarkable facts of history.* Today a Mussulman may travel from Monrovia to Mecca, and thence to Batavia without once setting foot on 'infidel' soil. Three phases in this movement of expansion may be distinguished. In the first (638–1050) the Arabs, in a *rapid advance,* propagated Islam along the whole Mediterranean coast, from Egypt to Morocco, a conquest greatly aided by *the exploitation of the country* by Byzantine [Christian] governors, the divisions among the Christians, and political disorganization. The second period (1050–1750)--all Africa except Ethiopia. . . . The last period of the Mohammedan expansion extends to the present time. . . . Daily, one may say, *Islam spreads.*" (*CE.* i, 187.) Christianity retrogresses. Aye, worse than that, for the vaunted miraculous nature and preservation of Christianity: "The one dangerous rival with which Christianity had to contend in the Middle Ages was the Mohammedan religion. Within a century of its birth, *it had torn from Christendom some of its fairest lands,* and extended like a huge crescent from Spain over Northern Africa, Egypt, PALESTINE, Arabia, Persia, and Syria, to the eastern part of Asia Minor. The danger which this *fanatic* religion offered to Christian faith, in countries where the two religions came in contact, was not to be lightly treated." (*CE.* i, 620–1.) Thus at the first onrush of the champions of Mohammed the Impostor, of a notoriously false Faith, the "Infidels" wrested from the devotees of the True Faith their holiest shrines, the empty Sepulchre of their dead God, the sites of his birth, crucifixion and resurrection; and they hold them unto this day. During three hundred years of bloody and fanatic "Holy Wars" united Christendom lost millions of lives and treasure in efforts to "rescue" this empty grave of its Christ from the impudent impostors; but for three hundred years the armies of the Cross were beaten and driven away from their sacred goal. "This immense fact," says Ingersoll, "sowed the seeds of distrust throughout Christendom, and millions began to lose confidence in a God who had been vanquished by Mohammed. . . . At that time the world believed in trial by battle —that God would take the side of the right—and there had been a trial by battle between the Cross and the Crescent, and Mohammed had been victorious." In their Westward course of conquest, "the

Moslems even crossed the Pyrennees, threatening to stable their horses in St. Peter's at Rome, but were at last defeated by Charles Martel at Tours, in 732, just one hundred years from the death of Mohammed. This defeat arrested their western conquests and saved Europe. . . . They were finally conquered by the Mongols and Turks, in the thirteenth century, but the new conquerors adopted Mohammed's religion, and in the fifteenth century, overthrew the tottering Byzantine Empire (1453). From that stronghold (Constantinople) they even threatened the German Empire, but were successfully defeated at the gates of Vienna, and driven back across the Danube, in 1683." (*CE.* x, 425.) The Christian God had failed to protect and save the vast majority of his own people. As Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes aptly says: "If the test of the validity of a religion is to be its growth, spread and proselyting capacity, then Mohammedanism can make a more impressive appeal than Christianity. Christianity had the advantage of being launched six and a half centuries before Mohammedanism. Yet today the Mohammedans far outnumber the Christians, and the Mohammedans have, moreover, reconquered the very areas in which Christianity arose and established its first strongholds." (Barnes, *The Twilight of Christianity*, p. 416.) This may close with a quaint specimen of medieval Christian historical learning, from that great literary light of the Church, Monk Matthew Paris (died 1259), who, says *CE.*, "as an historian holds the first place among English chroniclers." In "his great work, 'Chronica Majora,' from the Creation until the year of his death," the erudite Monk explains the unworthy motives why Mohammed quit the True Church and became an impious Infidel: "It is well known that Mohammed was once a cardinal, and became heretic because he failed to be elected pope. Also having drunk to excess, he fell by the roadside, and in this condition was killed by swine. And for that reason, his followers abhor pork even unto this day"! This notable occurrence was probably later than the time when Buddha was canonized a Catholic Saint.

"THE MARKS OF THE BEAST"

"And the Beast was taken . . . which deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast . . . and both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Rev. xix, 20.)

The Apocalyptic Marks of the Beast are translated by ecclesiastical sophism into the pretended "Four Marks of the Church": Apostolicity, *Sanctity*, Unity, Catholicity, as branded upon the "Visible Body of Christ" by the Formula of the Council of Constantinople in 381 A. D. (*CE.* iii, 450–758). The first two of these Marks we have seen totally obliterated by the processes of the review of the Record which we have made, and by the seas of blood and clouds of smoke of burning human bodies which have stained them beyond recognition; and the third is simply a frayed figure of clerical speech. Probably no one will envy The Church the fourth and only remaining of its holy Marks. As for "Unity," it is a very relative term; as long as even two units cohere there is unity—of those two. Christendom was once coextensive with the Roman Empire, and was then by force and arms further extended over all the north of Europe; we have seen the process. Then came the Arab incursion, and within one century the Church lost its most splendid fields and Churches, the vast Christian territories of Asia and Africa, and Spain. The "Great Schism" between East and West tore the immense Eastern Empire from the "Unity" of the True "Catholic" Church. The Turks, turned Mohammedan, in turn wrested the lost Eastern Empire from Christianity and it became Infidel, as mostly it remains today. Then came the "so-called Reformation" revolt of Luther: "The effect of the Reformation was to separate from the Church all the Scandinavian, most of the Teutonic, and a few of the Latin-speaking populations of Europe." (*CE.* iii, 704.) To these must be added England, Scotland, Wales, a good part of "Ever Faithful" Ireland; much of the Americas followed in the train of disaster. The age-long causes of this last destruction are well known; they have cried out on nearly every page of this book. Succinctly: "Since the twelfth century, the Church was losing much of its influence on the thoughts of men. . . . The faults and wealth of the clergy must have contributed something. . . . The growth of national divisions, the increased secularism of everyday life, the diminished influence of the Church and the papacy, all these interdependent influences had broken up the spiritual unity of Christendom *at least two centuries before* the Reformation. . . . At the beginning of the seventeenth century, *Christendom was weary of religious war and persecution.* . . . Religious divisions were too deep-seated to permit

the reconstruction of a Christian polity." (*CE.* iii, 704.) The final note of despair of the Church,—of rejoicing for all freed from it,—is the conclusion of its review of Christendom: "The word *Christian* has come in recent times to express our common civilization *rather than a religion which so many Europeans now no longer profess*"! (*Ib.*) Let us be rid of the hateful Word!

In a word, men had long since come painfully to realize the incontrovertible truth stated by the historian of Civilization in England: "The prosperity of nations depends upon principles to which the clergy, as a body, are invariably opposed." (Buckle, Vol. II, Pt. 1, p. 42.) What of the divine mark of "unity" is thus left in the Church is the fast disappearing coherence of decaying particles in face of the general débâcle attendant upon the Articles of Death.

WHY—AND WHAT PRICE—RELIGION?

"Leave thy gift upon the Altar, and go thy way." *Jesus.*

"They which minister about holy things, live of the things of the Temple; and they which wait at the Altar are partakers of the things of the Altar." *Paul.*

"The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." *Anon.*

All ancient religions we have seen are admittedly false, all Pagan priestcrafts fraudulent. The Pagan priestcraft held the lavished wealth of millions of superstitious dupes, and ruled the minds and destinies of men and nations. The motive and *raison d'être* of priestcraft, confessedly, was greed and graft, wealth and power and privilege. When Paganism later was called Christianity,—No man can deny history by alleging any difference: we have seen too many analogies and identities. At the advent of Christianity, scores of religions flourished throughout the Roman Empire; the Roman world was thick covered with sumptuous Temples and swarmed with plutocratic Priestcraft. So rich were the "pickings" from the superstitious masses and rulers and so alluring the "Get-rich-quick" possibilities of religion, that new creeds and cults were ever in the making. Christianity came along, born in poverty and "made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things" (1 Cor. iv, 13); but even then petty faction leadership had its meed: the believers in the quick end of the world and

the Second Coming in the Kingdom, pooled their poor belongings "and laid them down at the apostles' feet"; and these holy ones operated this first pool. But "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved," and it gradually increased in strength if not in grace. As the numbers grew and prestige and contributions increased, many "false teachers" arose among the "Sheep" and brought "damnable heresies" into the Fold. Scores of the "right-thinking" Fathers filled parchments with dreary diatribes "Against all Heresies," of which over ninety flourished in the first three centuries, which *CE.* catalogues and describes the hair-splitting differences of doctrine which gave excuse to splitting the Fold and dividing the spoil, and for cutting throats and beating out brains until the end of the seventh century. All these factious sects of "Christians" waxed more or less powerful and wealthy; the Arian anti-Trinity "heretics," the Donatists, Montanists, Manichæans, Monophysites, and innumerable others divided Europe and the contributions of the credulous for centuries, until suppressed by law and sword of the Orthodox. It is the latter, the True Church, which "gathered gear by every wile (*un*)-justified by honor." An authoritative summary, gleaned at random from *CE.*, of the grafting results is instructive.

"When peace was given to the Church by Constantine, at the beginning of the fourth century, an era of temporal prosperity for the Church set in. As Europe gradually became Christian, the donations for religious purposes increased by leaps and bounds. Gifts of land and money for ecclesiastical purposes were now legally recognized, and though some of the later Roman emperors *placed restrictions* upon the donations of the faithful, yet the wealth of the Church rapidly increased. Whatever losses were suffered in the [incursions of the barbarians], were made up for later, when the conquering barbarians in their turn were converted to Christianity. . . . The wealth of the Church at this period [the "so-called Reformation"] has sometimes been made a matter of reproach to her, . . . admitting that abuses were indeed at times unquestionable." (*CE.* iii, 762.) Such "abuses" and the ghoulish clerical greed were exactly why some of the later Roman emperors "placed restrictions" on grafting the Faithful. Lecky gives a graphic picture of the priests with the itching palm: "Rich widows were surrounded by swarms of clerical sycophants, who ad-

dressed them in tender diminutives, studied and consulted their every foible, and, under the guise of piety, lay in wait for their gifts or bequests. The evil attained such a point that a law was made under Valentinian depriving the Christian priests and monks of that power of receiving legacies which was possessed by every other class of the community." (*History of European Morals*, ii, 151.) These shaming facts are confirmed by many of the contemporary Fathers. From the Latin text of St. Jerome I turn into English his mournful admission that the deprivation was justified: "The priests of the idols might receive inheritances; only the clergy and monks were prohibited by this law, and prohibited not by persecutors, but by Christian princes . . . I grieve that we should merit this law." (*Epist.* lii.) We remember that already the Christian emperors, by "persecuting laws," had prohibited Pagans from making wills and from receiving bequests, and the law which declared all wills void which were not made before a priest,—who was there to get his share. The priestly profits rolled up through the Ages of Faith. Out of hundreds of like generalizations and specific instances cited, I make these limited selections, which show the universal process of clerical greed.

"The early Christians were lavish in their support of religion, and frequently turned their possessions over to the Church. . . . Towards the end of Charlemagne's reign the regenerated peoples contributed generously to the support of ecclesiastical institutions." (v, 421.) Indeed, so great had its volume then become, that "Church property excited the cupidity of the various factions, upon the death of Charlemagne." (v, 774.) Even a hundred years previously the Church estates could make a prince's rewards: "Charles Martel is charged with secularizing many ecclesiastical estates, which he took from the churches and abbeys and gave in fief to his warriors as a recompense for their services. This land actually remained the property of the ecclesiastical establishments in question." (vi, 241.) The Church grabbed all and shirked all; as a result, "Naturally there was a desire on the part of the king and princes to force the Church to take her share in the national burdens and duties." (vi, 63.) "To this age belongs the famous grant to the Church of one-tenth of his land by Ethelburt, father of Alfred the Great" (i, 507). "On the authority of the Doomsday Book [of William the Conqueror], the possessions of the Church represented

25% of the assessment in the country [England] in 1066, and 26½% of its cultivated area in 1086." (v, 103.) "In 1127 Stephen gave to these monks his forest in Furness. This grant was most munificent, for it included large possessions in woods, pastures, fisheries, and mills, with a large share in the salt works and mines of the district." (vi, 324.) "The see of Exeter was one of the largest and richest in England. The diocese was originally very wealthy." (v, 708–9.) "The English people at large complained of the enormous revenue which the pope and the Italians drew from their country, . . . the financial demands of the Curia." (vii, 38.) "Bitterness existed for a considerable time between the monks and the people of F., who complained of the abbey's imposts and exactions." (vi, 20.) "Vast sum of money extorted from the English clergy in 1531." (iv, 26.)

In France the clergy formed "a wealthy body of men, gradually extending their possessions throughout the kingdom" during the Middle Ages. (i, 795.) "In 1384 . . . almost a third of the land in the kingdom of Bohemia belonged to the Church." (ii, 613.) In Germany, twelfth century, "the difficulty of administering the vast landed possessions caused the abbots to grant certain sections in fief." (vi, 314.) "The gifts of German princes, nobles, and private individuals increased the landed possessions of the abbey so rapidly that they soon extended over distant parts of Germany,"—long list of provinces. (vi, 313.) "In parts of Germany [in 1770] the number and wealth of the religious houses, in some instances their uselessness, and occasionally their disorders, tempted the princes to lay violent and rapacious hands on them." (iv, 38.) "The luxury of bishops and the worldly possessions of monks" led to violent rebellion in Italy, in twelfth century. (i, 748.) At this and most times, the "prelates were the most powerful and the wealthiest subjects of the State." (ii, 186.) "The steady growth of power and wealth of the Church, since the beginning of the twelfth century, introduced an ever-increasing spirit of worldliness." (vii, 129.) "The liberality of the faithful was a constant incitement to depart from the rule of poverty. This liberality showed itself mainly in gifts of real property, for example, in *endowments for prayers for the dead, which were then usually founded with real estate.* In the fourteenth century began the *land wars* and feuds (*e. g.* the Hundred Years' War in France), which relaxed every bond

of discipline and good order." (vi, 284.) To all this and these, "the faults and wealth of the clergy must have contributed something. The spiritual ruler seemed almost merged in the *sovereign of Rome* and the feudal lord of Sicily. Money was needed, and in order to obtain it funds had to be raised . . . and by means which aroused much discontent and affected the credit of Rome. . . . Even in the twelfth century complaints of venality were frequent and bitter." (iii, 703.) "Simony, the most abominable of crimes . . . was the evil so prevalent during the Middle Ages." (xiv, 1, 2.) Hundreds of instances are recited in *CE.* of the teeming wealth wrung by the Church and clergy from the fears of the Faithful; of the inordinate riches of popes and prelates, abbots and monks, Churches and their plethoric treasuries. The Church existed for riches and it got, rather ill-got them in inestimable enormity of amount. From the cradle to the grave of every Faithful who had anything to get, the Church wheedled, extorted or coerced it. Fear was ever the foundation of the Faith and of the "liberality" of contributions to it.

Among the greatest and greediest mints of ecclesiastical finance, were Simony, several times above mentioned,—the sale of every kind of hierarchical office and dignity, from the popedom to the jobs of the meanest servitors of the Servants of God; and the sale of Indulgences, or remissions of the pains of Purgatory. This non-existent place of expiation of "Sin," acquired or "Original," to fit the befouled soul for Heaven, was first charted if not invented by His Holiness Gregory the Great, about 600 A. D. "An indulgence offers the penitent sinner the means of discharging this debt [to God] during the life on earth" (*CE.* vii, 783),—provided that "debt" is adequately liquidated by cash into the coffers of God's Vicars on earth. These indulgences are of various kinds, efficacy and price: "The most important distinction, however, is that between plenary indulgences and partial. By a plenary indulgence is meant the remission of the entire temporal punishment due to sin so that *no further expiation is required in Purgatory.* A partial indulgence commutes only a certain portion of the penalty. . . . Some indulgences are granted in behalf of the living only, while others may be applied in behalf of the souls of the departed" (*Ib.* 783–4). Leo X, he who perpetrated the celebrated aphorism—"What profit has not that Fable of Christ brought us," rose in defense of the

revenues, and in his Bull "Exurge Domine," 1520, "condemned Luther's assertions that 'Indulgences are pious frauds of the faithful'; . . . the Council of Trent, 1563, pronounces anathema against those who either declare that indulgences are useless or deny that the Church has power to grant them" (*Ib.*). The flimsy basis of the traffic is thus referred to the forged "famous Petrine text" which we have seen is itself a huge fraud: "*Once it is admitted* that Christ left the Church the power to forgive sins, the power of granting indulgences is logically *inferred*" (p. 785); but logically perfect inferences can readily be made from false premises; the premises must be true to yield valid and truthful "inference" or conclusion. Not only were genuine but false indulgences hawked throughout Christendom, resulting in immense revenues—and abuses, for "one of the worst abuses was that of inventing or falsifying grants of indulgence. Previous to the Reformation, such practices abounded" (p. 787). The Council of Trent sought to stop outside profits from this traffic, declaring it to be "a grievous abuse among Christian people, and of other disorders arising from *superstition, (etc.)* . . . on account of the widespread corruption" (*Ib.*); though it seems that now "with the decline in the *financial possibilities* of the system, . . . there is no danger of the recurrence of the old abuses" (p. 788). But still they sell well and net fine revenues; the writer has invested in them several times in Mexico, for souvenirs, —there being no Purgatory for unbelievers in that fiery near-Hell.

A graphic picture is drawn by the great historian of the Middle Ages, which shows Avarice as the cornerstone and effective motive of the Church. Hallam, Von Ranke, and many historians, give revolting examples in the concrete through many ages; here is their summary:

"Covetousness, especially, became almost a characteristic vice. . . . Many of the peculiar and prominent characteristics in the faith and discipline of those ages appear to have been either introduced or sedulously promoted for the purposes of sordid fraud. To these purposes conspired the veneration for relics, the worship of images, the idolatry of saints and martyrs, the religious inviolability of sanctuaries, the consecration of cemeteries, but, above all, the doctrine of purgatory and masses for the relief of the dead. A creed thus contrived, operating upon the minds of barbarians, lavish though rapa-

cious, and devout though dissolute, naturally caused a torrent of opulence to flow in upon the Church. . . . Even those legacies to charitable purposes, . . . were frequently applied to their own benefit. They failed not, above all, to inculcate upon the wealthy sinner that no atonement could be so acceptable to Heaven as liberal presents to its earthly delegates. To die without allotting of worldly wealth to pious uses was accounted almost like suicide, or a refusal of the last sacraments; and hence intestacy passed for a sort of fraud upon the Church, which she punished by taking the administration of the deceased's effects into her own hands. . . . And, as if all these means of accumulating what they could not legitimately enjoy were insufficient, the monks prostituted their knowledge of writing to the purpose of forging charters in their own favor, which might easily impose upon an ignorant age, since it has required a peculiar science to detect them in modern times. Such rapacity might seem incredible in men cut off from the pursuits of life and the hopes of posterity, if we did not behold every day the unreasonableness of avarice and the fervor of professional attachments." (Hallam, *History of the Middle Ages*, Vol. I, Bk. vii, *passim.*)

"STOP! THIEF!"

Ambitious and avaricious Christians who had been unable to get their hands into the "orthodox" Treasury of the Lord, were incited by the vision of the seas of easy money which flowed into it and by the ostentatious opulence of the partakers of the Lord's Altar, to emulate the zeal for riches displayed by the truly Faithful. A lengthy article under the title *Impostors*—[or is it "*Stop! Thief!*"?]—is devoted by *CE.* to the long line of hypocrites with itching palms who broke away from the True Fold the better to fleece the Faithful by their impostures. The period of the Great Schism of the West, particularly, "was also an epoch when many fanatical or designing persons *reaped a rich harvest* out of the *credulity of the populace.*" (*CE.* vii, 699.) Many thousands left the True Church and flocked after religious Pretenders of every sort, pouring treasures into their uncanonical coffers, to the great pecuniary deprivation of Holy Church. Dozens of these perverters of the Sacred Revenue through the suc-

ceeding centuries are catalogued, coming down to our own near-secular times. Invidiously included under the opprobrious designation of "Impostors" are the inspired Prophet of the Mormons, Joseph Smith, and the inspired Prophetess, Mother Mary Baker-Glover-Patterson-Eddy,—the immense financial success of whose respective religions may well excite envy, and bring them within the terminology of Orthodox *Odium Theologicum*—a "BITTER ENEMY, THE HEAD OF THE RIVAL RELIGION," as is the approved form, to credit *CE.* (vii, 620), in speaking of one's religious rivals. The point of the moral is, that according to Orthodox criteria all these Harvesters in the Vineyard of the Lord are unscrupulous Impostors for revenue only, and batten only by preying on "the *credulity* of the populace,"—which is the by-product of Religion, as we have seen it exemplified. When Ignorance is ended Credulity ceases, and Ecclesiastical Pelf and Power languishing die. If, as profanely jibed, "Without Hell Christianity isn't worth a damn," *a fortiori*—without Revenue, is not Religion without Reason to be?

Made wise by the history of the past, in modern times most constitutions and governments, all in which the Church is not still powerful, have put just restrictions on the rapacity of the Church and have forbidden direct subsidies of support to it and its ministers. Indeed, "In most European countries the civil authority restricts in three ways the right of the Church to receive donations: by imposing forms and conditions; by reserving the right to say what institutions may receive donations, and by requiring the approval of the civil authority." (*CE.* v, 117.) In this country, Federal and State constitutions ordain separation of State and Church, forbid the establishment of any religion, and prohibit grants of money in support of it. But withal, so inveterate is the force of grafting habit, so prone yet the politicians to cater to "The Church" upon the specious pretext that the Church and religion are of some utility for "moral" purposes and as "the Big Policeman" for the restriction of vice and crime—the politicians not being familiar with the "moral record" of the Church, that the Church evades the principle and often the letter of the law, and is yet largely supported and kept alive by the people through the secular State. Some nine billions of dollars of deadhand and deadhead property thus escapes taxation in the United States, and the idle and

vicious priestcraft and its system are supported by the State its constitution and laws notwithstanding. For every dollar of tax-exempt property, the taxpayer pays double. The vast majority of the people supports thus a small but vocal minority, which but for such public favors would soon perish off the land, for its own membership could not and would not keep it going if it had to pay the taxes, the burden of which it now shifts to the unbelieving or indifferent majority. The system is unjust and undemocratic, is immoral. In his Annual Message to Congress in 1875, President Grant pointed out that the tax-free property of Churches was at the time about one billion dollars; that "by 1900, without check, it is safe to say this property will reach a sum exceeding three billions of dollars"; and he added:

"So vast a sum, receiving all the protection and benefits of Government without bearing its proportion of the burdens and expenses of the same, will not be looked upon acquiescently by those who have to pay the taxes. In a growing country, where real estate enhances so rapidly with time, as in the United States, there is scarcely a limit to the wealth that may be acquired by corporations, religious or otherwise, if allowed to retain real estate without taxation. The contemplation of so vast a property as here alluded to, without taxation, may lead to sequestration without constitutional authority and through blood. I would suggest the taxation of all property equally, whether church or corporation." (*Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* vol. vii, p. 334–5.)

Sequestration and blood have been required to put a curb on Church greed in many modern and "Christian" countries, even in Italy, Spain and France, the "most favored nations" of Holy Church. Russia and Mexico have followed suit; they had been ground into desperation by the luxurious exactions of their respective Churches, and the debased ignorance and poverty which were thus imposed on their peoples. Every country of Europe, even the "Most Christian," where the Society of Jesus has grasped wealth and power, has been forced to expel the parasites; and to "padlock" the vast establishments of religious orders. If one would take a census of illiteracy and poverty, just in those countries where the Church has had or yet has most power and wealth, the people are most ignorant and impoverished. It may be a "coincidence," but it is a very suspicious matter of fact. All these things are of the "fruits," moral and educational, of Christianity.

THE "TRIUMPH" OF CHRISTIANITY

Until now the "damning things of the Church" arrayed in these pages, have been known only as the result of laborious research by a limited number: I broadcast them now so that they may be known to all. Even the "Man of God" may plead ignorance heretofore of the frauds of his Church and the falsity of his religion. Here it is demonstrated to him. To beg money now on the plea that the giver "lendeth to the Lord," that money paid for prayers for the dead relieves the souls in Purgatory,—both these coin-cajoling pleas are now known to be false; obtaining money by these false pretenses, now, is Larceny. This is timely and serious warning, which it may be salutary to heed.

AN APPEAL TO REASON

"If any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant." *Paul.*

"Where we can understand, it is a moral crime to cherish the un-understood." *Shotwell.*

These two quotations represent the difference between the viewpoints of the cleric and the scholar. "A mere recital of facts is of little avail unless certain fundamental principles be kept in view," says our oft-quoted Defender of the Faith,—a truth which I would now drive home to the reader—but in a very different sense than is expressed in the clerical conclusion of the sentence,—"*and* unless the fact of Christian revelation be given its due importance." The False Pretense of "Christian revelation" has been exposed and exploded by the real revelations of falsity and fraud in every pretended one of them, by this same Apologist for Christian imposture. Contrasting the wondrous results of "Christian" training—such as we have seen exemplified—with those suffered by the poor Pagan without any revelation, the same Apologist makes this deprecatory comment: "That he should *learn to think for himself* was of course out of the question. With such a training, the *development of free personality* was of course out of the question." (*CE.* v, 296.) Such a disparaging verdict much rather condemns the Christian system and its aims and results, which obviously are, that its devotees, or victims should be "able to believe automatically a number of things which—[in reason]—they know are not true," and which they must therefore accept "of faith," subjecting their reason to the priest-instilled Faith. It is to the awaken-

ing of Reason, in the light of the facts herein presented, that I appeal against the pre-occupations or prejudices of Faith,—those "superstitions drunk in with their mother's milk," and never since questioned with open mind.

The ex-Pagan Fathers of Christianity now turned Defenders of the new Faith, and propagandists of it among their fellow Pagans, were very fervid and eloquent in their appeals to the reason of the Pagans as against their mother-inherited superstitions. In his First Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, Father Justin Martyr makes a fine appeal for the use of reason in defiance of tradition and authority,—a fine gesture to the Pagan,—but a principle seldom applied by a Christian in point of his own imposed creeds: "Reason directs those who are truly pious and philosophical to honor and love only what is true, declining to follow the opinions of the ancients, if these be worthless." (Chap. ii; *ANF.* i, 63.) As the preceding review has shown the opinions of the ancient Fathers to be worthless with respect to the "facts" of the Christian religion, and that that religion is quite worthless either as divine truth or effective police, it should therefore be discarded, except for such good moral precepts as are to be found in it as in all religions and all moral systems.

In those times the Christian Church was small and feeble, and had not yet snatched the cynical power whereby, ever since, it "*requires the acceptance and practice not of the religion one may choose, but of that which God prescribes . . .* to be the only true one," as asserted by His Holiness Leo XIII, in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, of November 1, 1885. (*CE.* xiv, 764.) Whereupon, the "choosers" of their religion became "heretics," and were quite "*justly burned*," as that same Pope admits. But before the successors of Constantine gave the Church the sword and the stake for persuasions unto faith, it was necessary that the Christian Apologists should appeal to reason with the intelligent classes of Pagans. Father Lactantius uses argument in his great Apology addressed to Constantine and intended for the learned Pagans of the imperial entourage, which I would earnestly address now to those who yet hesitate in their inherited Christianity:

"It is therefore right, especially in a matter on which the whole plan of life turns, that every one should place confidence in himself, and use his own judgment and individual capacity for the investigation and weighing

of the truth, rather than through confidence in others to be deceived by their errors, as though he himself were without understanding. God has given wisdom to all alike, that they might be able both to investigate things which they have not heard, and to weigh things which they have heard. Nor, because they (our ancestors) preceded us in time, did they also outstrip us in wisdom; for if this is given equally to all, we can not be anticipated in it by those who precede us." (Lact., *Divine Institutes,* II, viii; *ANF.* VII, 51.)

If no one, upon reason, or even by caprice, ever changed his opinion, belief, status, we would all be savages still. In matter of religion, the ancestors of every one of us were once Pagans, and those who became Christians were dubbed "atheists" by those remaining faithful to the old gods,—until they too changed to the new. Then these ex-Pagan ancestors of ours were Catholics, of the "orthodox" or one of the ninety-odd "heretic" brands which finally perished or conformed by Grace of God and the Orthodox sword. Others many of our good Catholic ancestors just a few hundred years ago became "heretics" of the Protestant brands, and so continued or until lately continued,—and then threw off the old tradition of faith, and became Rationalists. Every gradation of change was due to one pregnant cause: increasing intelligence of the individual. Each advance sloughed off sundry inherited articles of faith, which then became discarded superstitions. Dean Milman spoke truly of the reason for the decadence of the Pagan religions; his reasons apply as aptly to the Christian: "The progress of knowledge was fatal to the religions of Greece and Rome. . . . Poetry had been religion; religion was becoming mere poetry." (*Hist. of Christianity,* I, 33.)

Father Lactantius has a Chapter entitled "Cicero and Other Men of Learning Erred in not Turning Away the People from Error." It is a moral crime, as Dr. Shotwell says, to cling to error when we can come to understand it as error. Not only that, urges Lactantius, it is wrong for those who know a vital truth to refrain from striving to turn men away from harmful error. His argument was much applauded by the Church, and is the argument of every missionary to the "heathen" today. Lactantius thus justly chides:

"Cicero was well aware that the deities which men worshipped were false. For when he had spoken many things which tended to the overthrow

of religious ceremonies, he said nevertheless that these matters ought not to be discussed *by the vulgar,* lest such discussion should extinguish the system of religion which was publicly received. . . . Nay, rather, if you have any virtue, Cicero, *endeavor to make the people wise:* that is a befitting subject, on which you may expend all the powers of your eloquence . . . in the *dispersion of the errors of mankind, and the recalling of the minds of men to a healthy state."* (Lactantius, *Divine Institutes,* II, iii; *ANF.* VII, 43.)

To this ideal of the use of Reason, which Lactantius and the earlier Fathers of the weakling Church held before the intelligent Pagans to incite them to discard the errors and superstitions of Paganism, this book is devoted in the earnest hope and purpose to evoke the use of Reason to the discard of the identical errors and superstitions of "that newer Paganism later called Christianity," which yet persist among the priest-taught masses of Christendom.

That Christian Appeal to Reason was not with the intelligent classes of Pagandom very effective; more persuasive methods must, therefore, be divised to bring the Pagans to the Altar and Treasury of the Lord. We have read the succession of laws of the now "Christian Emperors," which at the behest of the Priests proscribed Paganism upon pain of death and confiscation, made outlaws of all who refused to take the name of Christian, or continued to offer incense to the old gods, or became "heretics" to the official Faith; all who were guilty of these "crimes—let them be stricken by the avenging sword." As the newer "barbarian" nations came upon the Christian scene, "the Catholic Faith was spread by the sword" among and upon them, and all who hesitated or backslid were murdered by Christian law and sword. Crass ignorance, credulity and superstition were then imposed and enforced upon Christendom in order to "preserve the purity of the faith" in the unthinking minds of unknowing dupes of the Church and the Priests who waxed in wealth and in dominion over witless Christendom. When after a millennium during which men were too ignorant to be heretic, the light of thought and reason began to dawn upon the horizon of the Dark Ages of Faith, the Inquisition and the Index, the tortures of the rack and the stake, were providentially provided for the further preservation of Faith by augment of Ignorance and Terror. In all these holy Ages of Faith, in this "civi-

lization thoroughly saturated with Christianity," the Siamese Twins of Creed and Crime, Faith and Filth, popular Poverty and Ecclesiastical Opulence, stalked hand in hand—"the inseparable companions of Religion." The Renaissance and the Reformation came to enfranchise men from Authority and blind Obedience, and the way was blazed for Rationalism and the Age of Reason. The unquestionable record of all this we have read in the amazing and unblushing confessions of Holy Church itself.

At the time of the Reformation admitted conditions existed which today are infinitely more active and more thoroughgoing: "The Christian religious ideal—[never a matter of practice]—was to a great extent lost sight of; higher intellectual culture, previously confined in great measure to the clergy, but now common among the laity, assumed a secular character. . . . Only a faint interest in the supernatural life survived." (*CE.* xii, 703.) Education is now becoming universal; the hateful history of the Church and of Religion is becoming general knowledge; the Church, forced by ever-growing Secularism and Rationalism, has lost the power of compulsion and all but that of persuasion to belief in its forged and fatuous creeds, with all but the unthinking minority, and is itself almost secularized, held together as a sort of social center for the masses without other social contacts, and as matter of "good form" for the pretentiously pious, were infantile hymns are vocalized to an empty Heaven, and the *unco gude* chorus their petitions to the unhearing and unheeding Throne of Grace, "beseeching the Lord upon the universal prayer-theme of *'Gimme!'* " Universally, too, as old John Duffy poetizes it, "The rich they pray for pounds, and the poor they pray for pence."

The utter futility of prayer in objective sense for the obtaining of the subject-matter of the supplication, even of the "Give us this day our daily bread,"—which many do get and many and more others miserably go without, is confessed by *CE.*, which frankly attributes all these things to the operation of the Law of Chance: "The *apparent success which so often attends superstition can mostly be accounted for by natural causes*, although [it piously adds] it would be rash to deny all supernatural intervention (*e. g.* in the phenomena of Spiritism). When the object is to ascertain, or to effect in a general way, *one of two possible events, the law of probabilities gives an equal*

chance to success and failure; and success does more to support than failure would do to destroy superstition, for, on its side, there are arrayed the *religious instinct,* sympathy and apathy, confidence and distrust, encouragement and discouragement, and,—perhaps *strongest of all—the healing power of nature.*" (*CE.* xiv, 341.) There, in a nutshell, is the profound psychology of the priest-instilled "religious instinct," and of the hit-or-miss "efficacy of prayer" for the cajoling of "heavenly gifts" of earthly benefits and of the eversion of the heaven-sent or devil-inflicted evils whereof suffering humanity is the sport and prey,—to the utter indifference of their Celestial Pater!

The last sentence of the clerical admission above—"the healing power of nature," bears destructively upon one of the most insistent of religious superstitions, the efficiency of prayers, and saints, and relics, and shrines, and pious mummeries, to which millions of the afflicted and deluded of God's children resort for the relief of their torments and the cure of their diseases,—which their loving Father God inflicts or prevents. From the earliest times of priestcraft until this very year of grace, the priests and parsons and charlatans of every stripe preach and encourage this ancient heathen superstition, —and reap rich rewards through the imposture. The perfectly natural cause and explanation of numerous occasional instances of success at the game, which incites to further superstition and greater abuses, is curiously but truly confessed: "There are *few religions* in which recourse is not had to *supernatural aid for miraculous cures.* The testimony of reliable witnesses and the numerous ex-votos that have come down to us from antiquity leave no doubt as to the reality of these cures. It was natural that they should have been *viewed as miraculous in an age* when *the remarkable power of suggestion to effect cures* was not understood. Modern science recognizes that strong mental impressions can powerfully influence the nervous system and through it the bodily organs, leading in some instances to sudden illness or death, in others to remarkable cures. Such is the so-called mind cure or cure by suggestion. *It explains naturally many extraordinary cures recorded in the annals of many religions.* Still it has its *recognized limits. It cannot restore of a sudden a half-decayed organ, or heal instantly a gaping wound caused by a cancer.*" (*CE.* xii, 743.)

This thus confesses the huge false pretense of "miracle of God" in

such cases of relief or cure of nervous or mental maladies as are claimed for the impostures of Lourdes, St. Anne's, Malden, the Calvary Baptist Holy Rollers and all such shrines of religious imposture and superstition. In antiquity, the fictitious Pagan gods did not exist,—the cures attributed to them and paid for to the priests were entirely due to nature, and the claims of the priests were frauds. The Christians now confess the "recognized limits" of their God to do more than Nature did under the Pagan gods: the pretense of "miracle," of "supernatural intervention" is seen to be as fraudulent in modern times as it is admitted to have been in ancient. The Pagans believed, and prayed, and paid the priests, and some by auto-suggestion found relief or were cured, many others believed, and prayed, and paid—and their natural sufferings were enhanced by their disappointment. But did they cease therefore to believe and pray and pay? Probably then the pious apologetics of defeatism were the same as now. If the thing prayed for cometh to pass—"the gods have—God has—answered our prayers; blessed be their—His—holy name!" and the fortunate results are noised abroad. If by equal chance the prayed-for benefit is unattained, then "God knows better than we what is best for us," and the less said about the failure the better for childlike Faith. When exposed to danger or death we escape, it is "the wonderful Providence of God,"—nothing being thought or said about those so curiously designated "Acts of God" which permitted or inflicted the disaster; whereas, if we die or continue in suffering, why, "God's ways are not our ways"; "the ways of God are beyond our finite understanding," *et cetera* of pious apologies for the silence and failure of God to help his suffering and neglected children.

It would seem that every fossil of credulity embedded in the ancient Rock of Faith has in the course of this review been picked out and the Rock itself drilled through and through for the easy task of final demolition. For nigh two thousand years it has cast its baleful shadow upon civilization, stunting and dwarfing the minds and faculties of men clouded by its worthless bulk. Though vastly undermined and hacked and tottering, the blighting effects of Church and religious superstition are yet in many odious respects persistent; humanity and civilization yet suffer under the lingering disease of priest-imposed delusions and the hateful miasma of religious intolerance in

every land cursed yet by priestcraft, parsonate, and the odium of theology.

"When the Devil was sick, the Devil a Saint would be!" The Church is dying now; has been forced despite itself and its enginery of torture and murder, to desist from the worst of its deviltry, to appear a bit civilized; some of its partizans and dupes think it "reformed," pure-minded and clean-handed. It is only measurably so perforce, and reluctantly. Even today the Law of God, conserved in the latest Edition of the holy Canon Law, commands murder for unbelief; these infamous "principles are in their own nature irreformable; . . . owing to *changed conditions* [forced upon it by secular civilization] are to all practical intents and purposes obsolete . . . *The custom of burning heretics is really not a question of justice, but a* question of civilization"! (*CE.* xiv, 769.) Thus the Church confesses itself uncivilized; it retains and insists upon the God-ordained *justice* of burning and murder; but is forced by heretic civilization, acquired in bloody despite of the Church, to conform to the decrees of Civilization. But as—however—Holy Church is impotent, dying, and will soon be dead—then only *De mortuis nil nisi bonum!*—Speed its hastening Death!

Founded in fraud by avarice and ambition, propagated by sword and fire, perpetuated by ignorance and fear; by increase of knowledge and free expression of thought rendered now all but impotent except in will and malice, priestcraft yet grasps for power and dominion over mind and spirit of men. In present default of rack and stake, it struggles yet to impose itself through such unholy means as it can still partially command,—fines and imprisonment under ridiculous medieval laws for the absurd priestly "crimes" of blasphemy and sacrilege, "desecration of the Lord's Day" by innocent diversions instead of attending dull preachings and paying the priests by the gift upon the Altar or in the contribution plate. Odious laws for the repression of human liberty; for the outlawing of honest men who refuse the superstitious forms of Religious Oath imposed in courts and legal proceedings, of which several shocking instances have recently occurred, depriving men of liberty and property, and potentially of life through refusal of their testimony in court. Religious Intolerance flames through the land, as notorious instances have lately made evident. Good Christians yet cordially dislike and distrust all others of differ-

ing brands of Faith, which sentiments Christians and Jews religiously reciprocate in holy hatred and intolerance of each other, while all unite in utter abhorrence and damnation of the Liberal and the Unbeliever, condemned alike by private Christian spite and public obloquy, of a vocal and intolerant minority; by political disqualifications for public office wherever this or that Sect is yet in a majority and can enforce its intolerance by law. "A careful study of the history of religious toleration," says the historian of Civilization, "will prove, that in every Christian country where it has been adopted, it has been forced upon the clergy by the authority of the secular classes. At the present day it is still unknown to those nations among whom the ecclesiastical power is stronger than the temporal power." In quite half the countries of Latin America and several of Europe—the most backward and poverty-stricken and priest-ridden of them—yet today public office and honors can be attained only by the votaries of the Sect in power, and the free and public practice of any other than the official cult is prohibited by law. I have the codes of these "Christian" countries.

Even in our own "tolerant" country today, religious fanaticism succeeds in its attacks, to impose by law the "sacred science of Genesis" in the universities and schools to the outlawry of the teachings of the truths of Nature. Preachers and teachers who dare express honest opinions of liberalism or unbelief are by pious religionists discharged and their families deprived of bread and support. Religious Pharisees seek to seize the public schools to disseminate their obsolete superstitions in the minds of youth—the hope of the future, and the last chance of the Church. Individual peace and friendliness, public peace and good understanding are often jeopardized and destroyed by Religion. Corrupt and insulting ecclesiastical government is rampant in many of our large cities and in a number of entire States. In a word, and despite all, the Twentieth Century is still under the hang-over spell of medieval theology and all the holy spites and intolerances of rancorous Religiosity.

The fatal work of Church and Priest through the Christian Era—as herein revealed, has wrought ignorance, superstition and vice: it has been and remains a supreme failure. Faith is become obsolete before Facts. Christianity is proved to be a fraudulent Bankrupt; this is its final adjudication before the bar of Civilization.

The Christian Religion—shown to be a congeries of revamped Pagan Superstitions and of Priestly Lies—*is not respectable* for belief: every honest and self-respecting mind must repudiate it in disgust. We can all "Do good, for good is good to do"!

Faith—fondly called "the most precious heritage of the race," is not a thing whereof to be proud; it is not Intelligent or of Reason. Not a flicker of intelligence is required to believe: millions of the most illiterate and ignorant of earth's teeming populations are the firmest in their "faith" in every form of religious superstition known to the priests of the world, the most devout believers of this or that imposture,—"most assured of what they are most ignorant" withal. Indeed, as aptly quoted: "Unbelief is no crime that Ignorance was ever capable of being guilty of." Buckle truly says, that to the secular and skeptical spirit European civilization owes its origin: that "it is evident, that until doubt began, progress was impossible" (Ch. vii, 242); and *CE.* has confessed, as is also self-evident,—"Toleration only came in when Faith went out." What a boon then to humanity to hasten and complete its going!

Disbelief, doubt, inquiry of truth, rejection of superstition, is distinctly an act of Intelligence; it often requires heroic virtue of bravery and independence of mind to disbelieve, to revolt against and reject the creeds and credulities of the ignorant community,—as evidenced by the whole holy bloody history of religious rancor and intolerance which has so inadequately but shockingly been reviewed. It is the bravest men and the finest minds, with high courage to dare and defy Holy Church, whom that unholy Hoodlum has murdered, but who have saved and recreated Civilization, as even yet inadequately it has been achieved.

Think to what Civilization might have attained by this Twentieth Century. For nigh two thousand years Christianity has held sway and thrall over the most dominant part of the world and portion of the human race. In each generation for most of the two thousand years there have been hundreds of thousands of men and women—priests, monks, nuns, and "religious" nondescripts, devoted through life to the unrealities of "Other-worldliness" to the utter neglect of the world in which they lived, resolved, all too oft, "to make of earth a hell that they might merit heaven." In the pursuit of such impracticalities, and to force all others to believe, doubtless millions of books and sermons of

sophistry have been their output, not to mention ignorance, wars, famines, plagues and bestialities innumerable that they have brought about to the destruction of civilization. Thus, in aggregate, millions of human beings—many of them of very high mental capacity, have devoted some millions of years of labor or of sloth to Theology and Religion,—lives, years and labor wasted! If these years and labors had but been devoted to pure and applied Science, to the discovery and conquest of the powers of Nature, to Knowledge of the Worth While—medicine, surgery, anesthetics, antiseptics, sanitation—the catalogue is endless; to the outlawry of War and the establishment of universal Peace; the abolition of Crime, Poverty, and Disease—in a word, to the Social Sciences and Service, to Humanism and the Humanities, instead of to Theism and Theology—to what glorious heights would not Civilization and Humanity have scaled!

The timorous Religionist—affrighted at the threatened loss of the "consolations of Religion,"—at facing the realities of life without the "opiate" and "crutches" of Faith, often asks: "What are you going to give us in its place?" *A cure!*—so that you will not need these artificial aids. When the surgeon excises a dangerous tumor, or the physician heals a mental or physical disease,—he restores to health of body or mind,—does not inflict some other form of disease in place of the one cured. So with the fictitious mental disorder of Religion,—for that it is a mental disorder of most malignant kind is proved by the inveterate hates and crimes it has caused the sufferers from it to be guilty of through all the Ages of Faith, as disclosed in this review. The sufferer goes through life, actually—or what is the same thing, under the delusion of disability,—hobbling on crutches, or with frequent injections of "dope" to allay real or imagined pain. Either by material means or by "mind cure" he is healed of the real or imaginary ailment: he throws away his crutches, discards his daily narcotic; health and strength come to his members and his whole body; the faculties of the mind are freed from the inhibitions of disease and disability. The grandest cure ever wrought in the man and in humanity is to free the mind from Superstition, to release all the energies of mind and body for the glorious work for Mankind. The noblest and most blest worker for Humanity is the Humanist.

Religious Toleration and freedom of thought and of beneficent re-

search, came in only as religious Faith went out; Civilization began only as the Dark Ages of Faith came to an end. The Church has had its long Night—those Dark Ages of Faith. Therein it shed its boasted refulgence of "sweetness and light"—in the Dark. The Church is very like the fire-fly—the homely Lightning Bug,—it needs darkness in which to shine. But the Day is come; the supernatural Light of the Cross is faded and paled before the luminous truths of Nature discovered now and exploited by free men for the good of mankind.

It remains yet to complete the good work for civilization and humanity by destroying the last lingering works and delusions of decadent and decayed priestcraft; through the universal triumph of Rationalism to fully and finally *Ecraser l'Infame.* Truly and prophetically spoke Zolà: "Civilization will not attain to its perfection, until the last stone from the last church falls on the last priest!"

A new and free Civilization rises from the ruins of the Ages of Faith; with heart aglow and high purpose set on the attainment of the ancient "Supreme Good," it hails the glorious possibilities of the scientific Age of Reason, which will redeem humanity from the blight of the centuries of Unreason. Men may now know and freely and unafraid make known the truth: and the Truth shall make mankind Free.

In the fine imagery of Dr. Trattner, his autobiographic God looks into the now not so distant Future, and thus communes: "Before Me is the Scroll of Destiny. See! Man has already scaled the foot-hills. Not one man alone, or two, or three, but all the nations. Everywhere men and women together are now leading their children forward consecrated to the Ideal. . . . I am satisfied. It is the day—the day of complete Emancipation!"

FINIS—FIDEI

INDEX

(Letter "s" after page-number, signifies *et seq.*)

Aaron, death, 68.
Abduction, 344.
Abel, Christian Saint, 273.
Abgar-Jesus forged correspondence, 106, 109s.
Abraham, great scientist, 148-149.
Absurd, Christianity, therefore believed, 124, 145.
Acta Pilati, forgeries, 105s.
Acts, forged, list of, 104s.
Acts of St. Sylvester, forgery, 251.
Adam: Augustine on monstrous descendants of, 160s; name is false translation, 76; books forged in name of, 66; Sin of, in apocrypha, 87.
Adultery: of animals in Ark, 146; marriage akin to, 145-146; forgery of "Woman taken in," 228.
Æsculapius, miracle cures of, 140-141.
Æsop, historicity compared with Jesus, 99.
African gods and priestcraft, 7.
Agape, Christian scandals, 343.
Agapetæ, Christian scandals, 343-344.
Agatha, St., Volcano-stopper, 271.
Age of Apocryphal Literature, 48, 95s.
Age of Faith, uncritical, 279.
Angus Dei, Christian fetich, 293-294.
Agrapha, Christian forgeries, 104.
Ahriman, Devil of Mithraism, 21-24.
Ahura Mazda, Mithraic God, 21-25.
Albertus Magnus, suppressed scientist, 367.
Albigenses, murder of, 348.
Alexander the Great: virgin birth of, 8; introduced Mithraism, 20, 21; conquered armies of Jehovah, 325.
Almah: does not mean "virgin,"—Virgin Birth fraud, 63-64.
Ambrose, St.: forgery of Apostles' Creed, 108; fables about Cross, 279.
Amending the Bible, 174-176.
Anagram: "Ixthus—fish," forgery, 35s, 166.
Angel-Owl forgery, 119-120.
Angels: Pagan myths, 23s; names of, Babylonian, 24; taken into Jewish apocrypha, 19-20; have sexual intercourse with humans, 167.
Angutkok, American priests, 6.

Animals: in Eden talked, 81; in Ark, adultery, 146; freakish notions of "Fathers," 136, 146, 161-162; offended Saints like wild, vi, ix.
Annunciation, to Virgin Mary, forgery, 207.
Anonymous Gospels, impossibility, 181-182.
Anro Mainyus. See *Ahriman.*
Anthon, quoted, 40.
Antichrist, epithet, 3.
Antipodes, Augustine on, 160; the Pope and St. Vergilius, 362s.
Anti-popes, doublet and triplet sets, 355.
Apocalyptic forgeries, Jewish, influence on Christian, 86s.
Apocrypha—forgeries: defined, 46; Age of apocryphal literature, 48, 95s; flood of, 180; classification of, 100s; Church regarded as inspired, 46; apostles vouched for that in Catholic Bible, 50, 54; Christian, "fraudulent intent," 99-100; Jewish, as source of Christian doctrines, 84s; Christian interpolations in Jewish, 67; vogue of Jewish, in Church, 48; came through Septuagint, 61; vouched for by Jesus and Fathers, 89; list of Jewish apocrypha, 66-67; *Esdras,* etc. as Scripture, 55; Original Sin derived from, 87; catalogue of principal Christian apocrypha, 100-107.
Apollo, testifies of Christ, etc., 38.
Apollonius of Tyana, Pagan Christ, 13s.
Apostles: sketch of Twelve, 127-130; fictitious *dramatis personæ,* 127-128; vouched for Jewish forgeries in Vulgate, 50.
Apostles' Creed, forgery, 108.
Apostolic Canons, forgery, 241.
Apostolic Constitutions, forgery, 240-241.
Apostolic Fathers, account of, 130s.
Apostates, numbers and influence of, 320.
Appeal to Reason, 395s.
Aquinas, St. Thomas: vouches for Sibyls, 40; on viewing torments of hell, 162.
Arabs: civilization and learning of; effects on Christendom, 378s; preserved medical science, 368; origins and spread of power, 381s.
Aramaic, language of Jesus and apostles, 216-217.
Archangels, from Mithraism, 24.
Arianism: Constantine on trifling point, 248; rent Empire, 250; conflicts over, 346; Multiplication Table of, 319-320.
Aristeas: forged Letter about Septuagint, 58-59.
Aristotle: sketch of, 329; Articles of Faith due to, 33; influence on Scholasticism, 337-338.
Articles of Faith; due to Aristotle, 33; for Fools, xv.
Asmodeus: a Mithraic devil, 26; a Christian devil in Tobit, 51, 52.
Assumption of Moses (Jewish forgery): Christian doctrines from, 88; inspiration vouched for by Fathers, 47.
Athanasian Creed: forgery, 108-109; exclusive salvation in, 3.
Atheists: St. Justin admits being,

79; outlawed as witnesses, xxix, seq.
Augustine, St.: sketch of, 157s; subjects reason to faith, xv, 158-159; Gospels incredible, xv, 191; on Antipodes, 160, 362; on Creation and giants, 160; vouches for *Enoch*, 87, 167; books on Lying, xxiv; on Liberty of Error, 315; on "Compel them to come in," 171, 315; on Magic, 164-165; on men turned into animals, 165; on monstrous, headless races, *Skiopodes*, 160-161; Sermon to headless race, xxiv; on immortality of peacocks, 161; on truth of fable of Romulus and Remus, 163-164; on salamander and hell, 161-162; on freakish natural History, 161-162; on Septuagint, 60, 166-167; on sexual intercourse of devils and angels, 167; on superstition drunk in with mother's milk, xi, 164; on Sibyls, 36, 165-166.
Authorities, ecclesiastical, for this Book, xxviii.
Avesta, chief Christian doctrines from, 21s.
Avarice and wealth, of Church and clergy, 386s.

Baaras root, for devil-exorcism, 87.
Bacon, Roger, suppressed scientist, 367.
Bankruptcy of Christianity, 403s.
Barbarians, did not overthrow Eastern Empire, 381.
Barnes, Harry Elmer, quoted, 384.
Baronius, Cardinal, "Annals," 363-364.
Baruch (Jewish forgery): Original Sin from, 87; many Christian doctrines from, 88; inspiration of, Fathers on, 89.
Baptism: Pagan ceremony, 29; of Pagan gods into Christian saints, 41; for purification of body, not of soul, 117; formula, in name of Trinity, forgery, 225-227.
Barnabas, Epistle of: Christian forgery, 136; Church regarded as scripture, 181.
Battle, trial by, between Christ and Mohammed, 383.
Beasts, offended Saints like wild, vi, ix.
Bel and Dragon, forgery, inspired, 89.
Believe, because unbelievable, 145.
Benedict XIV, Pope: on inspiration of Sibyls, 40.
Benefit of Clergy, 375-376.
Benevolence: in Buddhism, 28; in Mithraism, 20; in Pagan Rome, 359-360.
Bible: Infallible Truth, God its Author, 201-202; full of errors and contradictions, 202; every Book a forgery, Chaps. II and V; forgeries in O. T., 67s; held by Church as book of Science, 370, 379-380; science in Bible is false, 379-380.
Biblical Commission, Papal: tinkering with Bible texts, 175; on Creation-myths as basis of Christian Religion, 72.
Birth, New: Pagan doctrine, 29.
Blasphemy Laws, in U. S., xxxi.

Blood: lake of in Hell, vi; Holy, liquifying, 270, 272.
Blue Laws, xxxi, *seq.*
Bollandists, and the Saint-mill, 268.
Book of Dead, Egyptian, 17.
Book of Popes, forgery, 241-242.
Books: condemned not for forgery but for heresy, 47; burning of, to keep Faithful from learning the truth, 371; Index of Prohibited, 370-371.
Bootlegging Religion into Public Schools, xiv.
Brothel, Papal Lateran as, 341.
Bryce, Lord, on Donation of Constantine, 257.
Buckle: on clergy opposed to civilization, 386; on toleration forced on clergy, 408; on civilization due to skepticism, 404.
Buddha and Buddhism: sketch of, 27s; identities with Christianity, 28; sayings like those of Jesus, 28; "Life" of Buddha vehicle for Christian truth, 28; canonized as St. Josaphat, 269; miracle by idol of Buddha, 266; Buddha enjoins truth, xxvii.
Burbank, Luther, quoted, v.
Burning: of books, to keep Faithful, ignorant, 371; of heretics, just, 402; approved by Leo XIII, 396.

Cadman, as Mohammedan, if born that way, xii, *seq.*
Cambyses, and sacred cats, 245.
Cardinal: Baronius, on bogus saints, 364; Newman, on Christian doctrines from Paganism, 29; of New York City, on bootlegging religion into schools, xiv.
Canon, of Scriptures: Hebrew canon, when closed, 45; Christian, first fixed by Council of Trent, 54; no suggestion of in N. T., 97; result of denials and disputes, 98; idea of original canon not historical, 97-98.
Canonical, definition of, 45.
Canonicity: defined as apostolic authorship or authority, 181s; Gospels not canonical until late 2nd century, 183-184.
Canon Law: "science of" due to forged Decretum of Gratian, 263; yet enjoins burning and murder of heretics, 402.
Canons, Apostolic, forgery, 241.
Catholic Bible: apocrypha in, 50; forged "Wisdom of Solomon" in, 48.
Catholic Church (see Church): has never erred and never shall err, 49; losses of, 383-385.
Catholic Encyclopedia: admissions of, destroy Christian religion, xxix; examples throughout this book.
Catholics, number of, and 14 sects, in U. S., vii.
Cato, on priests laughing on meeting, xxvii.
Cats, Cambyses' use of sacred, 245.
Censuses in Wilderness, padded like Church statistics, vi.
Centuriators and Catholic historians, 363s.
Cesset Superstitio, in Law prohibiting Paganism, 31, 305.

Charlemagne: relations with the popes, 253s; crowned Emperor, 255; alleged gifts to Church doubted, 254, 259.

Cherubim, from Babylonian and Zoroastrian religions, 24.

Children: victims of religion, xi; Faithful know more than philosophers and scientists, 371.

Chinese miracle, 266.

Chosen, Four Gospels, out of many, 186.

Chrism, fables of, 252.

Christian: "word has lost its meaning," 386; religion not respectable, 404; Scripture forgeries, Chap. III, p. 91s.; Era, false, 71-72.

Christianity: origins obscure, 91s, 125s; "miraculous attestations" of, 382s; "triumph" of, Chap. VII, p. 295s; a compound of Jewish and Pagan myths and superstitions: Christian doctrines from Jewish apocrypha, 84-90; from Paganism: 2s, 10s, 17s, 21s, 23s, 29, 90.

Christians: as Sibyllists, 34; as Sun-worshippers, 147.

Christmas: Pagan holiday of Mithraism, 22, 31.

Christology: derived fully from Jewish forgeries, 67.

Christs, Pagan: 13s.

Chronology, Biblical, false, 73-74; Christian Era, false, 71-72.

Church—*"Ecclesia"*: use of word in Matthew, forgery, 213, 217-218; Catholic, never erred, and never shall err, 49; not founded by Jesus, 215-219; founded "on this rock," forgery, 215-219; enchains reason, and enslaves children, xiv-xv; "highest type of culture," 363; claims glory for Science, 372; moral corruption of, 341s; Forgery Mill, Chap. VI, p. 238s; is not civilized, 402; Divine Teaching Mission, 321s; tolerates and encourages superstition, 240, 280; asserted inspiration of Jewish forgeries, 47; is in Politics, xxxiii; beginnings of illicit consortium of Church and State, 251s; statistics of, vi, *seq.*; is on Toboggan, vii; mental calibre of membership, vii; percentage of members to population, vi; percentage of increase, viii; deserves defeat, ix; losing ground since 12th century, 385s; immense losses of, 383-385; dying, and seems saintly, 402.

Cicero, on Pythian Oracles, x.

City of God, Augustine; account of, 157, 159; extracts from, 159-167.

Civilization: "universal ruin" under Christianity, 357; rebirth of, 373s; due to skepticism, 404; what it would be but for Christianity, 404s; Zolà on its perfection, 406.

Classics, "preserved by Monks," 356s.

Clement of Alexandria: sketch of, 148s; on inspiration of Sibyls, 36, 149; on inspiration of Septuagint, 60; on inspiration of *Enoch*, 87; makes false quotations, 104.

Clement of Rome, Pope (?): sketch of, 131s; didn't know of Gospels, 182-183; forgeries in his name, 131s; on phœnix as proof of resurrection, 132-133.
Clergy: only ones who could read and write, 374-375; reasons why, *Ib.*; corruption of, 341s, 346s; wealth and greed of, 386s; opposed to civilization, 386; "benefit of clergy," 375-376.
Clovis, "conversion" of, 251.
Codes: of Hammurabi and Moses, 9; of Justinian, laws, 304s; of Theodosius, 31, 304s.
"Compel them to come in," 171, 315, 317.
Constantine: sketch of, 243s; amalgamated all religions, "One State, one Church," 29s; favors Christians, why? 243s; "Conversion of," 243s; Donation of, 251, 256-257; Forgeries regarding, 251s; Edict of Milan, 301; Laws on Magic, 13; religious laws of, 304s; Murders by, 247; seeks Pagan and Christian absolution, 248-249; at Council of Nicæa, 248; Arian until death-bed, 31, 249; baptized Arian, 247; Apotheosized, 249; Eusebius on in Heaven, 247.
Constantine II, Pagan, 31; laws of, 304s.
Constantius Chlorus: favors Christians, why? 244; St. Helena, his mistress, 243.
Constantinople, dedication of, 30.
Constitutions, Apostolic: forgery, 240.
Contradictions: as evidence of forgery, 71s; and Truth, 203s; Bible full of, 202, 204.
Conversion: of Constantine, reasons for, 243s; compulsory and wholesale, 317s; but skin deep, 320s.
Copernicus, 370.
Copying: Gospel of "Mark" into others, 192.
Cornelius, conversion of, and Peter, 221-223.
Council of Trent: first fixed Canon, including apocrypha, 50, 54.
Counterfeit, of Church, taken by Protestants, xviii.
Counter-Reformation, 353.
Court-Martial, and fake Miracle, 267.
Covetousness of Church and clergy, 391-392.
Cradle-Age: best for religion, xii, *seq.*; determines Creed, xi-xiv.
Creation: Genesis account basis of Christianity, 72; but truth of denied by *CE.*, 73, 74; by gods, 75; various dates of, 59; myths of imposed by law, xxx, 73; Augustine on, 160.
Credibility: of Fathers, 124, 168s; of Gospels: Augustine on, 191; Tertullian on, 191.
Creed: determined by Cradle, xi-xiv; is superior to morality (*CE.*) xxvii; Apostles', forgery, 108; Athanasian, forgery, 108-109; exclusive salvation in, 3.
Credulity: popular, 44; of Christians, 99-100; encouraged by Church, 240, 280; source of clerical graft, 392.

Crib, Holy, fake relic, 279; vouched for by Pope, 286-287.
Crishna, Pagan Saviour, 27s.
Criticism, literary: principles of, 177; Fathers ignorant of, 99.
Cross, fake relic: "Invention" or Finding of, 281s; subsequent history of, 283; "Fiery," 244s.
Crown of Thorns, fake relic, "invention" of, 284s; 700 thorns, 285.
Crusades: causes and effects of, 376s; against Albigenses, 348; for conversion of Pagans, 317s.
Culture: of Pagan Greece, 322s, 334s; of Pagan Roman Empire, 333s, 358s; of Christian Dark Ages, 335s.
Cure, for religious disease, x, 405.
Cures, "miracle," Pagan and Christian, explained, 400s.

Daeva: Zoroastrian Devil, 25; origin of *Deus* and *Zeus*, 24; of Asmodeus, 26.
Dante, on Donation of Constantine, 256.
Dark Ages: 239, 335s; "saturated with Christianity," 366; a "universal ruin," 357.
Damnation, Infant, 299.
Dawn Man and Shaman, 4s.
Decalogue: fraud, 9; a natural moral code, 341.
Decameron of Holy Ghost, 69.
December 25th, Mithraic holy day, 22.
Decretals, False, of Isidore, forgery, 260s.
Decretum, of rejected books, forgery, 47.
Decretum of Gratian, forgery, 263.
Demiurge, Pagan-Christian, 156.
Demonology: Jewish - Christian, from Mithraism, 24s; in Jewish apocrypha, 87.
Devil: Pagan superstition from Mithraism, 23-25s; Christians, created by God, responsible for, 25; conjuring devils, Josephus on, 82, 83.
Devils: Pagan gods are, 41; origin and activities, 152-153; imitate Christian rites, 31s, 140s; have sexual relations with women, 167; exorcism, Pagan and Christian, 7.
Deus, and *Zeus,* derived from *Daeva,* 24.
Dialogi, of Gregory the Great, 43, 275.
Dictatus, of Gregory VII, 49-50.
Diomede Islanders, superstitions, 6.
Dionysius the Areopagite: forgeries, 128; apostles fictitious, 128.
Disbelief: rising tide of, vi-x; act of Intelligence, 404.
Dishonesty: of preachers, xi; of Patristic literature, 48.
Divine Institutes, of Lactantius; on Sibyls, 37s, 151s.
Doctors of Divinity: cause religious disease, v; dosed, xxxiii.
Donation of Constantine: a huge forgery, 255s; disproofs of, 257-258; for deception of Charlemagne, 254; Bryce on, 257; Dante on, 256; Gibbon on, 258.
Doomsday Book, wealth of clergy, 388-389.

Dreams, origin of notion of the supernatural, 4.
Dualism, Zoroastrian, 23.

Easter, Pagan origin of, 18.
Ecclesia, meaning and use of, 216-217; a forgery, 217s.
Edict of Milan, 301.
Education: in Pagan Greece, 322s; in Pagan Rome, 333; Christian, aims and results of, 335s; "Christian Education" Lie, 356s.
Ems Revolt against Church, 264s.
End of World: Mithraic superstition, 26; taken into Jewish apocrypha, 84s; oft proclaimed by Jesus, 93, 220.
Endings of Gospels of "Matthew" and "Mark," forgeries, 225-227.
Enemy: is rival religionist, 392; Christian love of, vi, 343.
Enoch, Book of: account of, 85-87; inspiration of, 85; preserved by Noah, 85; doctrine of Messiah, etc., from, 86s; genuine and prophetical, 47, 167.
Epistles: forgeries, 104s; list of forgeries, 230-237; none by Paul, 230s; none by Peter, 233s; forgeries in, 234-237.
Era, Christian, account of; is erroneous, 71-72.
Erasmus, "Prince of Humanists": exposed "Unknown God" forgery, 230; on Paul as forger, 230.
Error: Church "never erred, and never shall err," 49.
Errors, in N. T., admitted by *CE.* 173-174, 229.
Esdras, Books, III & IV: forgeries, regarded by Church as Scripture, 55; doctrine of Original Sin from, 87.
Ethics: see Morals.
Eucharist: Mithraic superstition, 23; general Pagan practice, 17.
Eunuch: Paul was, 146; Jesus enjoins making, 146; Origen was, 149.
Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea: dishonesty of, xxi; was Arian heretic, xxi; lie about martyrs alive after eaten, xxi; admitted liar by *CE.,* 105-106; lies about Fiery Cross, 244, 246-247; on Conversion of Constantine, 244-247; eulogy on Constantine in Heaven, 247; on Church prelates, 345; on Sibyls, 36; forged Abgar-Jesus Letters, 106, 109s; forged account of Jesus in Josephus, 115, 118; angel-owl forgery, 119-120; fables about Gospel of "Mark," 181-182.
Eve: forge *Life* of, 66; forged Gospel of, 172.
Evidences, of Christianity: 100s; "taken for granted," 125.
Evil, created by God, 23, 25.
Evolution: in Greek philosophy, 332; of Hebrew religion admitted by *CE.,* 70; of human civilization, etc., 74; teaching of banned by law, xxx.
Exorcism: African and Christian, 7.
Ezra: and Hebrew canon, 45; "restores" law, 55s; Fathers vouch for, 56.

Fable, of Christ, Leo X, 351.
Failure of Christianity, x, 403.
Faith: not knowledge, xviii; always defeated by facts, 372; fanatic, 372; apologies for failures, 400s; not intelligent, 404; What in place of? Cure! 405.
False Decretals of Isidore, forgery, 260s.
False Translations: evidence of forgery, 76; Adam, 76; *elohim*, etc., 75; Yahveh-Jehovah, 77s; Lord and Lord God, 75-76; phoenix, 147; soul, 76; "virgin," in Isaiah and Matthew, 63s.
"Fathers" of the Faith: character sketches, Chap. IV, p. 123s; all ex-Magicians, 123; in Mithraism, 22; mental and moral obliquity, 24-25, 169-170; all liars, xxii; admitted liars, xxi, *seq.*, 15; approve lying, xxi, *seq.*; opinions worthless, 41; make false quotations, 104; uncritical, 84; vouch importance of Creation myths, 72-73; for *Enoch*, 47, 167; for *Esdras*, 55; for Ezra and the Law, 56; for Jewish apocrypha, 47; for Pagan gods and miracles, 33, *passim*; on "Devilish Imitations," 31s, *passim*; for inspiration of Sibyls, 35s, *passim*; make no mention of Gospels until Papias and Irenæus, 196; immense output of Patristic works, 171.
Fear: origin of religion, 7s; Lucretius on Fear, 8.
Fish: Anagram, 35s, 166; Christian symbol, 36.
Firmament, destroyed by Galileo, 370. Church boasts suppression of Galileo, 370.
Finding: of Book of Mormon, 57; of Law of Moses, 57; of Cross, etc., 281s.
Fiery Cross of Constantine, fables of, 244s.
Forgery: defined by *CE.*, xix-xx; tests for forgery, 177-178; late appearance of document, 184; universality of Christian forgeries, xxv-xxvi, *seq.*, 264; all Christian documents and evidences forged, xvii, 62, 100s; Gospels and Epistles forged, 101s; condemned by Church only when heretical, 48; Christian forgeries in Pagan Oracles, 34s; in Jewish apocrypha, 67; forgeries in names of Fathers, 121; forgery by false translations, 74s; Church founded on forgery, 264.
Forgery Mill of Church: Chap. VI, p. 238s.
Foundling, Jesus Christ is of Church, 216.
Franks, Defenders of the Church, 251, 253.
Fraud: hateful to victims, xxxiii; Pagan frauds, 11, 42; taken into Christianity, 41s; in Christian apocrypha, 100; resource of cunning, 258.
"Fruits," of Christianity: 321s; Moral fruits, 339s; intellectual fruits, 356s.
Freethinkers: Church sneer at as "vagabonds," 371; but have saved Civilization, 404.

Galileo: discoveries of, ruined the Firmanent, 370s; treatment by Church, 370.

Genesis: Christian religion depends on, 72; but discredited by *CE.*, 73-74.

Genesis, Little, forgery, regarded as Scripture, 88.

Genus Shamanensis, 7.

Giants, Augustine on, 160.

"Gimme!", universal prayer theme, 399.

Giordano Bruno, burned, 370.

Gladiatorial combats, stopped by Church? 360.

"Go, teach all nations": forgery, 220-224, 236s, 239; text in forged endings of Gospels, 225-227; discredited by *CE.*, 223-224; false claims of Church, 322, 336, 339.

God, Gods: Pagan gods all devils, 32, 140s, 162s; "other gods" admitted, 71; created evil, 23, 25; African notions of, 29; forgery of One God myth, 75; Hebrew, had no Son, 78.

"God Manifest" forgery, 234.

Gospels: All Forgeries, Chap. V, p. 172; all late compilations, 201s; anonymous, 178-180; impossibility of being anonymous, 181-182; Titles of not apostolic, 178s; Endings of, forgeries, 225-227; oral for century, 94, 173; forged apocryphal, 101s; "many gospels" existed, 186-187; one by Jesus, 101, 103; list of over fifty, 102; no difference between apocryphal and canonical, 200-201; not mentioned in Epistles, 95; not written by Jews, but by Greeks, 184-186; not known to "Pope" Clement I, 182-183; not written in first century, 93s, 173s, 199; not known to Papias, 195; first mentioned by Irenæus, 185 A. D., 180, 189, 195s; earliest written by heretics, 189, 190, 193; Christian written to combat heretics, 189-190; Why Four Gospels?, *CE.* doesn't know, 187s; Irenæus explains, 188; real reason, 189-190; one for each principal Church, 189, 192-193; the "Four" Chosen, 186s; order of, 179-180; "canonicity" of, 181s; not regarded as Scripture until late second century, 183-184; contradictions in, 204; Augustine would not believe, unless forced, xv, 191.

Graft and greed of Church and clergy, 386s.

Grant, President, on Church tax-dodging, 394.

Gratian, forged *Decretum,* 263.

Greed and graft, of apostles, 127-130; of Church and clergy, 386s.

Greece: education and morals in, 322s; culture and science in, 324s.

Gregory I, the Great: on lying, xxv; lying *Dialogi,* 43; miracles and miracle tales of, 275s; Holy Ghost, dove-like, dictates to, 277; invented Purgatory, 390.

Gregory VII, braggart *Dictatus,* 49-50.

Guardian Angels, as Mithraic superstitions, 24.

Gulliver awakes, 373s.

Hammurabi, Code, pious fraud of, 9.
Hallam: on *False Decretals*, 261; on Church greed, 391-392.
Heaven: Mithraic myth, 26.
Hebrews: no word for "religion," 9; Holy Forgeries of Chap. III, p. 45s; religion of, not revealed, but natural development, 70, 89.
Hebrews, Book of, forgery, attributed to Barnabas, 234.
Hegel: on evolution of religion, 70; on methods of ancient history, 80-81.
Helena, St.: Pagan barmaid, mistress of Constantius, 243; "discovers" Cross and other fake relics, 281s.
Hell: Mithraic myth, 22s, 26s; taken over into Jewish apocrypha, 87; fire of, first kindled in forged *Book of Enoch*, 87; Augustine on, 161-162; Tertullian on, 298; Christianity without Hell, not worth a Damn, 393.
Heresy: means "Choice," 190; Gospels written to combat, 189-190; Christian laws against, 307s; fearful rôle and results of, 314; all heresies started for revenue, 190, 392s.
Heretics: 93 sects, 190; for revenue only, 190, 392s; justly burned, 396, 402.
Hermas, sketch of, 137; *Shepherd of Hermas*.
Hermes Trismegistus: account of, testimonies for Christ, 38, 153.
Herod Antipas, death, 119-120.
Hippocrates: sketch of, 328; father of Medical Science, 368.
History: ecclesiastical, all vices of clergy, xxviii; ancient notions of, 79s; Hegel on, 80-81; Josephus as example, 81s; Patristic historians, unreliable, 123, *passim*.
Hobbes: on the "Secular Arm," 316.
Holy Ghost: dictates to Pope Gregory, 277; finger and tail-feathers, fake relics, 290.
Holy Innocents, fake relics of, 289.
Holy Spirit: Mithraic myth, 25.
Holy Stairs: fake relic, 258s; Pope vouches for, 286-287; Luther and, 286.
Homoöusion: small, trifling question, 248; throat-cutting over, 345-346.
Humanism: defeating Christianity, ix; triumph of, 405.
Hystaspes, Pagan prophet of Christ, 36.

Ichthus—Fish Anagram, 35s, 166.
Identities: Pagan and Christian "properties," 22s; Buddhist and Christian, 28.
Idolatry, or Saint-worship, 41-42; idols made Christian Saints, 41s, 273.
Ignatius, St. Father, sketch, forged letters of, 133s.
Ignatius Loyola, Jesuit, reforms papacy, 353.
Ignorance: Paul enjoins, 395; Church encourages, 239-240, 280; incapable of unbelief, 404.
Illiteracy, in Christian countries, 394.

Imitations, Devilish: of Christian rites and doctrines, 31s, 140s.
Immortality: origin of idea, 4s; Pagan ideas, 90.
Impossible, therefore certain, 124; for Gospels to be anonymous, 181-182.
Impostors: all but True Church, 3, 392.
Incarnation: of Buddha, 27s; Pagan doctrine, 29.
Index of Prohibited Books, 370; 1929 edition, 370.
Indictment: against the Church and Christianity, xvi-xvii.
Indulgences: defined, 390; sale of, 390s; abuses of, 391.
Infant Damnation, 299.
Ingersoll: on inherited beliefs, xii; on robbing the cradle, xiv; on fraud, xxxiii; on effects of Mohammedan conquests, 383.
In hoc signo forgery, 244.
Innocents, Holy, fake relics, 289.
Inquisition: In Theodosian Code, 31; decrees for delivery to Secular Power, 310; for terror and ignorance, 366.
Inspiration: O. T. does not reveal any, 54; of N. T. is only a Catholic dogma (*CE.*), 97; what is inspiration, 96s; Tertullian on, 45; of Gospels not recognized till late second century, 183-184; Inspiration and Plagiarism, 191-192.
Intercession of Saints, Naples Gallery, 272.
Interpolations: proof of forgery, 178, 204.
Intolerance: Christian laws of, 302s; inherent in religion, 298; inseparable from religion, 309; yet rampant, 402s.
Invention, or forgery of the Cross, etc., 281s.
Irenæus: sketch of, 142s; makes false quotations, 141; on Septuagint as inspired, 60-61; on Jesus died an old man, 143-144; on Why Four-Gospels, 188, 193; is first to mention Gospels and writers, 195; on Gospels of Christians and heretics, 189.
Isaiah: Virgin Birth fraud, 63s; "sign" false prophecy, 65.
Isidore, *False Decretals*, 260s.
Ite, missa est! 180.
Ixthus—Fish Anagram: 35s, 166.

James, brother of Jesus: death of, 118; never had a bath, 129.
Januarius, St., lying miracles of, stops volcano, 270-271.
Jealous God, whitewash of, 175-176.
Jefferson, on Virgin Birth myth, 65.
Jeremiads, of Church, vi, *seq.*
Jerome, St.: on lying Fathers, xxii; his own lies, xxiii, *seq.*; on St. Paul as liar and forger, xxii; made Vulgate, 64; admits Virgin Birth a fraud, 64.
Jewish Apocrypha, see *Apocrypha.*
Jews, did not write Gospels, etc., 184-186.
Jesus, the Christ: family sketch, 129; considered crazy, 92; as magician, 14; mission to Jews only, 92, 220; preached Jewish

Kingdom of God, and end of world, 93; took doctrines from forged Jewish apocrypha, 89-90; vouches for forged apocrypha, 89; his Titles from apocrypha, 86-87; forged Gospel by, 101, 103; laid down nothing for belief, 190; Man or God?—at first only man, 205s; genealogies, false, 206-207; mythical Son of mythical God, 78; personal appearance, 112-113; picture, St. Veronica's Veil, fake, 113; words and deeds like Buddha, 23; correspondence with Abgar, forged, 106, 109s; forged passage on, in Josephus, 113s; date of birth error, 71; died an old man, 138, 143-144, 208; came to bring sword, 309; fearful results, 314.

John, the Baptist: Origen on, 116; Josephus on, 117.

John, Gospel of: forgery, not by "John," 200; chapter xxi, forgery, 223.

Josaphat, St., Buddha canonized as, 23.

Josephus: wild fables in writings, 81s; on conjuring devils, 82s; on Septuagint, 58-59; forged passage on Jesus, 113s; on John the Baptist, 117; owl-angel forgery, 119-120.

Jude, Book of: vouches for Jewish apocrypha, 47; cites *Enoch* and *Assumption of Moses*, as genuine, 88.

Judgment, Final: Pagan myth, 17; Mithraic myth, 26.

Jurgen, on Lake of Blood in Hell, v.

Justice: debased by Christians, 359s: was dead, 351.

Justin Martyr, St.: sketch of, 140s; makes false quotations, 104; admitted liar, 105, 106; Pagan gods and myths true, and prove Christ, 141; on inspiration of Septuagint, 60-61; on "restoration" by Ezra, 61; on divinity of Sibyls, 39, 142; on "Devilish imitations," 32, 140s; accuses Jews of forgery, 89; on Simon Magus' statue, 15s; didn't know Gospels, 195; Appeal to Reason, 396.

"Keys of Heaven and Hell," forgery, 214-215.

Kingdom of God, Jewish apocrypha, 86, 223-224.

Kings and Priests, combine to rule, 8s.

Knowledge: banned, v; fatal to religion, x, xi, 397.

Koran: on tolerance, 302-303; disregarded, in quest for truth, 378.

Labarum, Christian symbol, 245.

Lactantius: sketch of, 151s; Pagan gods and devils testify of Christ, 151; as do the Sibyls, 37s, 151s; epigram, *homo ex humo*, 153; on the Cross, 246; appeal to reason, 396-397.

Lance: fake relic, 284-285; rival lances, 285.

Land-grabbing by Church, 388s.

Larceny: in Church frauds for money-grubbing, 292, 395.

Law: of Moses, post-exilic, 57; "finding" by Josiah, 57; "restored" by Ezra, 55s; vouched for by Fathers, 56; Christian laws of murder, 302s.
Lear, quoted, 170.
Lentulus, Letter to Senate, forgery, 112.
Letters: of Lentulus, forgery, 112; of Jesus-Abgar, forgeries, 106, 109s; forged Letter of St. Peter, 252-253.
Liber Pontificalis, forgery, 241-242.
Library of Alexandria, 58.
Lies: regular system, to promote religion, xvi-xxvii; Church encourages.
Lightning-bug, Church like, 405-406.
Literature: ancient, character of, 48; medieval, 316s; age of apocryphal, 48-49; apocryphal, classified, 48-49; principles of literary criticism, 177; "Old Christian Literature," all forged, 172.
Logia, forged sayings of Jesus, 104.
Logos; Pagan-Jewish-Christian Myth, 154s; in Mithraism, 25; in Greek philosophy, 29; Pagan, Justin on, 33; god Mercury as, 141.
"Lord," "Lord God," false translations, 75-76.
Lord's Prayer, forgery, 228-229.
Lowell, James Russell, quoted, 373.
Lucifer, Mithraic myth, 24.
Lucretius: on Fear as making gods, 8; on Religion, 10.
Luke: "many Gospels," 197-198; date of "Luke," 197-198; Gospel not by Luke, 200. See *Gospels*.
Luther: on killing Church by stopping pay, xxxiv; on Holy Stairs, 286.
Luz, or "Resurrection Bone," 368.
Lying: see Lies.

Madonna and Child, Pagan idol, 17.
Magic: Fathers practiced, 124; Augustine on, 164-165; laws of Constantine, 304.
Man: "religious animal," v; epigram of Lactantius, 153.
Manna: fake relic of, 291; manna of saints, 293.
Mark, Gospel of: not by Mark, 200; first Gospel, copied by others, 192; tampered with, 191; not "scripture" when used by others, 192-193; Eusebius on, 181s; present, not known to Papias, 194-195; forged ending of, 225-227. See *Gospels*.
Marks of the Beast, 385s.
Marriage, Fathers on, 145-146.
Martyrs: alive after eaten by beasts, xxi; forged tales of, 266s.
Matthew, Gospel of: Not by Matthew, 199-200; present, not known by Papias, 194-195; "Virgin Birth" forgery in, 63-65; forged ending of, 225-227. See *Gospels*.
Matthew Paris, on Mohammed, as Cardinal, 384.
Mediator: Mithraic myth, 22, 23.
Medical Science: aid denied to unbelievers, 369; Arabs preserved, 368; Hippocrates, 328, 368;

Vesalius, first reviver of, 368-369.
Membership of Churches, vi, *seq.*; mental calibre of members, vii.
Mercury, as *Logos*, 141.
Mercury Trismegistus, Augustine on, 163; Lactantius on, 38, 153.
Messiah: doctrine of, and Messianic Kingdom, from Jewish apocrypha, 86-89; special "revelation" to Peter, forgery, 209-215.
Methuselah, survived Flood, in Septuagint, 59-60; helped save Book of *Enoch*, 85.
Milan, Edict of, text, 301.
Middle Ages: term defined, 364; "civilization saturated with Christianity," 366; "universal ruin," 357; state of civilization in, 366s.
Milk of Virgin Mary, fake relic, 272, 290-291.
Millennium, in *Enoch* and apocrypha, 87.
Miracles: Pagan frauds, 12; taken into Christianity, 42-43; vouched for by Fathers, 33, 141; forged Christian miracles, 266s; Buddhist and Christian, 266-267; credulity in, 42-43; cures, Pagan and Christian, due to natural causes, 399s.
Miscreant, term, xvi.
Missionaries, selling "Faith" to heathen, x.
Mistakes: Church never made, 49; Bible writers could not make, 201; Bible full of, 202.
Mithraism: "Divinely revealed Monotheism," sketch of, 20s; rival of Christianity, 18; success and defeat of, 21; relations to Christianity, absorbed, 21s; Mithras, Mediator, Saviour, 22; Emperors favored, 29; Constantine amalgamated, 29s.
Mohammedanism: x; Rev. Cadman as Mohammedan, xiii; rapid spread of, overthrowing Christianity, 383s; Mohammed a Catholic Cardinal, 384.
Monks: in Buddhism, 28; "preserved the classics"? 356-357.
Monotheism: in Mithraism, 20, 70; in Egypt, 70; a development, not revelation, in Israel, 70.
Morals: Christian "Morality Lie," 339s; are purely natural law, 340-341; morality in Pagan Greece, 322s; in Pagan Rome, 333-334; in Buddhism, 28; in Mithraism, "divinely revealed moral code," 20s; moral "fruits" of Christianity, 339s.
Mormon, Book of, "finding," 57.
Moses, Books of, forged, 68-70; Decalogue, natural law, 341.
Mother-of-God, Pagan myth, 17.
Murder: divine precepts of; for unbelief, 171, 295-297; Christianity founded on, 295; murders by Constantine, 247.
Mystical Marriage, cruel Christian fraud, 294.
Mythology, is Theology of dead gods and religions, 43.

Name of Hebrew God, revelation of, false, 77s; false translations of, 75-76.

Natural causes: of success of superstition, 281; explain prayer and miracle cures, 399s; explain moral code, 340-341.
Natural History, freakish: Augustine, 161-162; of Barnabas, 136; of Tertullian, 146.
Nativity, of Jesus: erroneous date, 71; purely human, 205-209.
Newman, Cardinal: on Patristic lying, xxii; on Paganism in Christianity, 29.
New Testament: no evidences of inspiration, 97; is Catholic dogma, 97; no errors in, 227; admittedly full of, 173-174; "doubtful" books and passages, 98-99; catalogue of N. T. apocrypha, 101s; forged passages in, 234-237. See *Epistles, Gospels.*
Niebuhr, Reinold, on dishonesty of preachers, xi.
Novelty: Christianity non-patentable for want of, 19.
Nun: in Buddhism, 28; swallowed devil, 275.

Oaths: religious, in N. C., etc., xxix.
Odium Theologicum: of priests, v, 95, 344, 385s; rival religionists, enemies, 393.
Oils, Holy, fakes, 292s.
Old Testament: reveals no inspiration, 54. See Chapter II, p. 45s.
"On this Rock" Pun, forgery, 209-219.
Oracles: Cicero on, x; Anthon on, 40; Sibylline, 34, 36s, *passim.* See *Sibyls.*
Origen, Father: sketch of, 149s; on Gospels "chosen," 186; on *Enoch,* 87; on Pagan inspiration, 150; on stars having souls, 150; on John the Baptist and James, 117; makes false quotations, 104.
Origin, obscure, of Christianity, 91s.
Original Sin: doctrine from Jewish apocrypha, 87.
Ormuzd: See *Ahura Mazda.*
Ordeal: trial by, 359; between Christ and Mohammed, 383.
Outlawry: by law in U. S., xxix *seq.;* early Christian laws, 304s, 307s.
Owl-Angel forgery, 119-120.

Pagan Culture: in Greece, 322s, 334s; in Roman Empire, 333s, 358s.
Pagan Frauds: Chapter I, p. 3s; some instances, 11, 42; adopted by Christians, 41, *passim.*
Pagan Gods: are devils, 32, 41; made into Christian saints, 41s, 273; testify for Jesus Christ, 38s, 40, 148. See *Sibyls.*
Pagan Miracles: held true by Fathers, 33, 141; taken up by Christians, 42; cures, 140, 400s.
Paganism: amalgamated with Christianity, by Constantine, 29s; proscribed by successors of Constantine, 11, 21, 31, 304s; in Christianity, 4, 10s, 17s, 89-90, 154s, 168s, 273s.
"Paganization" of U. S., vi, ix.
Palimpsests, 357s.
Papacy: corruption of, 347s; lowest ebbs of, 353-354.

Papias: sketch of, 137s; fabulous yarns, 138-139; on Gospels, 193-195; on "voluminous lies" for Christ, 199.
Parasites, social, 5-6.
Patent, none for "Christian Revelation," 19.
Pater Patratus, pope of Mithraism, 22.
Patrimony of Peter: origins, 251s; dubious muniments, 254, 259. See *Donation of Constantine.*
Patristic literary dishonesty, 48; traditions, 125-126.
Paul, St.: crafty and liar, 124; eunuch, 146; enjoins ignorance, 395; forger: St. Jerome on, xxii; Erasmus on, 230; as Simon Magus, 16-17; magical contests with Simon, 15-16, 107; no Epistles by, 230s.
Paulus, first Hermit: Jerome's yarns about, xxiii.
Peacock, Augustine on immortality of, 161.
Pentateuch, not by Moses, 70.
Pepin: becomes King, 252; alleged gifts dubious, 254, 259.
Persecution: by Christian law, 31, 302s; world weary of, 385.
Peter, St.: ignorant, 128; name, Simon, Cephas, 216; "Thou art Peter," forgery, 209-215; forged *apocalypse* of, 181; forged Letter to King of Franks, 252-253; Epistles of, forgeries, 233-234; "special revelation" to, forgery, 209-215; no "primacy" of, 219-220, 131; approved "Mark," 181, —did not, 182.
Petrine texts, forgeries, 209-219.
Philanthropy: Buddhist, 28; Pagan, 359s.
Philosophy of History: Hegel on, 80-81; Augustine on, 159s.
Phoenix: proof of resurrection, 133, 147, 168; false translation, 147.
Pilate: forged Report to Tiberius, 105, 106, 147-148.
Pillars, set up by Sethites, 81.
Plagiarism, in Gospels, 192.
Plato, Gospel agrees with, 33.
Platonism, and Christianity, 32, 159.
Plural: *elohim*—gods, 75.
Police, Religion as, 9s.
Politics, Church in, xxxiii.
Polycarp: sketch of, 134-135; martyrdom of, 135.
Popes, Book of, forgery, 241-242.
Popes: in Paganism, 18; in Mithraism, 22.
Poverty, greatest in Christian countries, 394.
Prayer: futility of confessed, 399s; *"Gimme!"* 399.
Prejudices, Christian, ix. See *Odium Theologicum.*
Priestcraft—Priests: origins of, 5s; in Africa, 7; and Kings, 8; opposed to knowledge, v, x; wealth of, Pagan, 8; of Christian, 386s; Pagan Priests all liars, 43.
"Prince of Peace": blood shed for, vi; as Lord of Hosts, 247; came to bring sword, 309.
Probabilities, Law of, explains success of Superstition, 399s.
Profits of Religion, 386s; in "Fable of Christ," 351.

Prophecies, of Pagan Sibyls, 40s.
Protestants, pass stolen counterfeit, xviii.
Pseudographic writings, vogue of, 48.
Pun, "Upon this Rock," forgery, 209-215.
Purgatory: invented by Gregory the Great, 390; larcenous, 395.

Rationalism: saviour of Civilization, xxxii, 404.
Reason: enchained by Faith, Augustine subordinates to Faith, xv, 158-159; never tortured Faith, 373; Appeal to, 395s.
Reform, "in head and members," never realized, 352, 355.
Reformation, effects on Church, 385-386.
Regina Cœli, fable of, 276.
Reinach, definition of religion, 8; quoted, *passim*.
Relics: forged and faked, 277s; *Cath. Encyc.* on, 278s; frauds of Church, 280; catalogue of, 288s; Pope vouches for, 286-287.
Religion: a disease, v; cure for, knowledge, x, 405; failure of, vi, *seq.*; no good at home, x; due to cradle, xi, *seq.*; origins of, 4s; founded on Fear, 7s; Terrorism, 295s; Reinach's definition, 8; as Big Policeman, 9s; enforced by Ignorance and Terror, 398; Laws of persecution, xxix, *seq.*; 402s; all Pagan religions frauds, 3; of Empire amalgamated by Constantine, 29s; Mithraism, 20s; Buddhism, 27s; Christian, depends on Genesis fables, 72-73; profits of, 386s; What Price? 386s; True Brand prescribed, 396; and Superstition, Lactantius on, 157; Bankruptcy of, 403s.
Resurrection, of Body: Mithraic myth, 26; in Paganism, 90; taken into Jewish apocrypha, 84, 87-90; proved by Phœnix, *q. v.*; of Jesus, taught by him, 211; but not so, 212.
Resurrection Bone, 396.
Retribution, Future: Mithraic myth, 26; taken into Jewish apocrypha, 89.
Revelation: defined, 18-19; in Mithraism, 26; Pagan notions as, 90; no Christian Patent for, 19; old Pagan stuff, 17, 19, 27; Jewish apocrypha as, 54s; cannot be controlled by Reason, 356; of name of Jehovah, false, 77s; special to Peter, forgery, 209, 212-214.
Revisions of Holy Writ, 174-176.
Revival of Learning, suppressed, 366s.
Revolt, Congress of Ems, 264s.
Rib of Adam, missing until Vesalius, 369.
Rock and Church, forgery, 215-219; Rock and Keys, forgery, 209-219.
Rome: Augustine on foundation, 163-164; education and morals in 333, 358s.
Russia: victim of Church, ix; G. B. S. on religion in, xv; Pope's prayer-crusade against, 286-287.

Sabbath, Babylonian origin, 22.
Sacraments, all Pagan, 29.
Sainte Ampule, fraud, 252.
Saints: Pagan gods made into, 41s, 273; Buddha canonized, 269; number and cost of, 268; Christian forgeries of, 266s; care in making, but some slips, 269; Intercession of, picture, 272; prophylactic qualities, 274.
Sant' Angelo, Castel, fable of, 276.
Salamander, evidence for Hell-fire, 161-162.
Salvation, exclusive, 3.
Satan: Mithraic myth, 26s, 90.
Saviour: Mithras as, 22, 23, 26; Crishna as, 27s.
Schools: bootlegging religion in, xiv; public damned by Encyclical, xiv; Pagan schools closed, 358; law closing, 306.
Science, in Greece, 326s.
Science: must not contradict Dogma, 364-365; limited by Theology, 365; because throws Bible into confusion, 380; always victorious, 365; Bible as Book of, 370, 377-380; is *forte* of Church, 362s; Church boasts about, 364s; killed by Church, 365s; Personified, by Trattner, 372-373.
Scripture, Jewish, forgeries, Chap. III, p. 91s; Christian "revelations" in Jewish apocryphal, 84-90.
Second Coming: constantly proclaimed, 93, 220; yet tardy, 95-96.
Secular Arm: compelled to do Christian murders, 310-315; infamous decree of Inquisition, 310.
Septuagint: sketch of, 58s; Josephus on, 58-59; Fathers fable and vouch for it, 60-61; Augustine on, 166-167; Tertullian on, 148; used by Fathers to propagate Christianity, 62; adopted by Church, 61-62; used until fourth century, 174; gross errors of, 59, 61-62; quoted 300 times in N. T., 185; brought Jewish apocrypha into True Bible, 61; Virgin Birth fraud in, 62s.
Sethites, pillars set up by, 81.
Shamans, origin, 4s.
Shipley, Maynard, book commended, xxxiii.
Sibyls, Oracles: sketch of, 34s; forged by Christians, 35; inspiration of, 36, 39; proofs of Jesus and Christianity, 37s; Fathers vouch for, 36, 37, 39, 40, 142, 151s, 165-166, 168-169.
Sibyllists, Christians were, 34s, 96.
Simon Magus: vouched for by *Acts*, 14s; statue of, 14-15, 141-142, 144; as Paul, 16-17; magic contests with Paul, 15-16, 107.
Simony, source of Church wealth, 390s.
Sin: Pagan forgiveness of, 249; Original, apocryphal, 87.
Skepticism, civilization due to, 404.
Skiopedes, Augustine on, 160-161.
Slavery, Church attitude on, 360s.
Social conditions: in Roman Empire, 358s; in Middle Ages, 347s.

Son of God: Mithraic myth, 25; Jewish usage, 208.
Soul: origin of notion, 4s; false Bible translation, 76; stars have, 150s.
Specula Stultorum, 269s.
Stars: rational and have souls, 150s; of Bethlehem, 150.
State and Church, origins of illicit cohabitation, 8s, 29s, 251.
Statue of Simon Magus; see *Simon Magus*.
Statistics, of Church, vi, *seq.*
"Stop! Thief!"—religious graft, 392s.
Suggestion, explains "miracle cures," 400.
Sun: *"Sol Deus Invictus,"* Supreme God, 30; Christians worshipped, 30, 147.
Sunday: Day of the Unconquered Sun, 30; Mithraic holy-day, 22, 31; made Pagan holiday by Constantine, xxxi, 31, 304; Sunday Laws, xxxi, *seq.*
Supernaturalism: ideal of Christian education, xiv, 399; frauds in, 7; waste of lives for, 404.
Superstition: *CE.'s* definition, 321; Lactantius on, 157; among Romans, 12s; drunk in with mother's milk, xi, 164; of Pagans as Christian revelations, 17s; encouraged by Church, 239-240; success of due to natural causes, 281, 399s; knowledge only remedy for, 239.
Sword: Jesus Christ brought, 309; Bull of Two Swords, 316.
Sylvester, Pope, forgeries, 255.
Symmachian forgeries, 259-260.

Taboos, as religion, 8.
Tax Exemption: of Christians by Constantine, 31, 304s; President Grant on, 393-394.
"Teach all Nations," forgery, 220-224; Church false pretenses, 322, 336, 339.
Temporal Power, 251s, 259.
Temptation by Devil: Mithraic myth, 26.
Terrorism, priestly, 295s.
Tertullian: sketch of, 144s; grounds of faith, 145; believe because impossible, 124; because unbelievable, 191; on result of belief, 374; on devilish imitations, 32; on *Enoch* and its preservation, 85, 86, 87; admitted liar, 106; false report of Pilate, 148; on Hell, 298; on interpolations, 204; on phœnix, 147; on Septuagint, 148; on Sibyls, 147; on women and virginity, 145.
Tests for forgery, 177-178.
Texts of Scripture: no official, 174; tinkering with, 174-176.
Theodosius, "Great" because first Church murderer, 302.
Theology: overshadows all else, 239; central Christian ideal, 364s.
Theophilus, as dating "Luke," 198-199.
Thirteenth Century: Church boasts, 348; intellectual activities suppressed, 367.
Thorns, Crown of: fake relic, history, 284s; 700 thorns from, 285.

Three Heavenly Witnesses, forgery, 234-237.
Three Steps, in Mithraism, 26.
Titles: of Gospels, not original, 178s; of Jesus from apocrypha, 86-87.
Tinkering, with Holy Writ, 174-176.
Tobias (*Tobit*), inspired fable of, 51s.
Toboggan, Church on, vi, *seq.*
Toleration: in Empire, 30; Edict of Milan, 301; only when Faith failed, 298; forced by secularism, 403.
Tradition, Patristic: defined, worthless, 125-126.
Translations, False: as evidence of forgery, 74s; of O. T., Augustine on, 62. See *False Translations;* of Septuagint, see *Septuagint.*
Trattner, Dr. Ernest R.: cited, 70; on Science, 372-373; on Day of Emancipation, 406.
Trent, Council of: see *Council of Trent.*
Trinity: Mithraic myth, 25; Pagan superstition, 29; baptism in name of, forgery, 225-227; "Three Heavenly Witnesses," forgery, 235-237.
Trismegistus, Hermes: Lactantius on, 153.
Triumph of Christianity: Chap. VII, p. 295s.

Unbelief: rising tide of, vi, *seq.;* due to increased knowledge, x.
Uncritical, Fathers, 99.
Unknown God, forgery, 229-230.
Unity, Catholic, 385s.
Universities: medieval Christian, 337s.

Valla, Lorenzo, exposed *Donatio,* etc., 258.
Vergilius, on Antipodes, 362.
Veronica, St., fraud, 113s.
Vesalius: revived Medical Science, 368-369.
Vices, clerical, xxviii, *passim.*
Virgin Birth: admitted fraud, 62-65; due to false translation, 63-65; disproved, 205-208; of Romulus and Remus, Augustine on, 163-164; as Pagan commonplace, 17s, 33, 140, 208; Jefferson on, 65.
Virgin Mary: "prolific yet ever-virgin," as adulteress, Jerome, 64; *conceived per eam,* 136; Tertullian on, 146.
Vivès, Louis, exposed Aristeas forgery, etc., 59.
Volcanoes, stopped by Saints, 270s.
Vulgate: by St. Jerome, and Virgin Birth fraud, 64; official Catholic Bible, 74; still tinkering with texts, 174-176.

Waste, on theology and religion, 404.
Wealth and greed of clergy, 386s.
Wisdom of Solomon, admitted forgery in True Bible, 48.
Witnesses, Three Heavenly, forgery, 234-237.

Woman, taken in Adultery, forgery, 228.
Women: loss of to Church, vi-viii; Chrysostom on, 146.
Writing: Augustine on origin of, 172.

Yahveh: "God of gods," 32; false translation of name, 75-77.
Zend Avesta, 21s.
Zeus, and *Deus,* from Mithraic *Daeva*—Devil, 24.
Zolà, on perfection of civilization, 406.
Zoroaster: prophet of God, 26; religion of, rival of Christianity, 18; taken into Christianity, 90. See *Mithraism; Paganism.*

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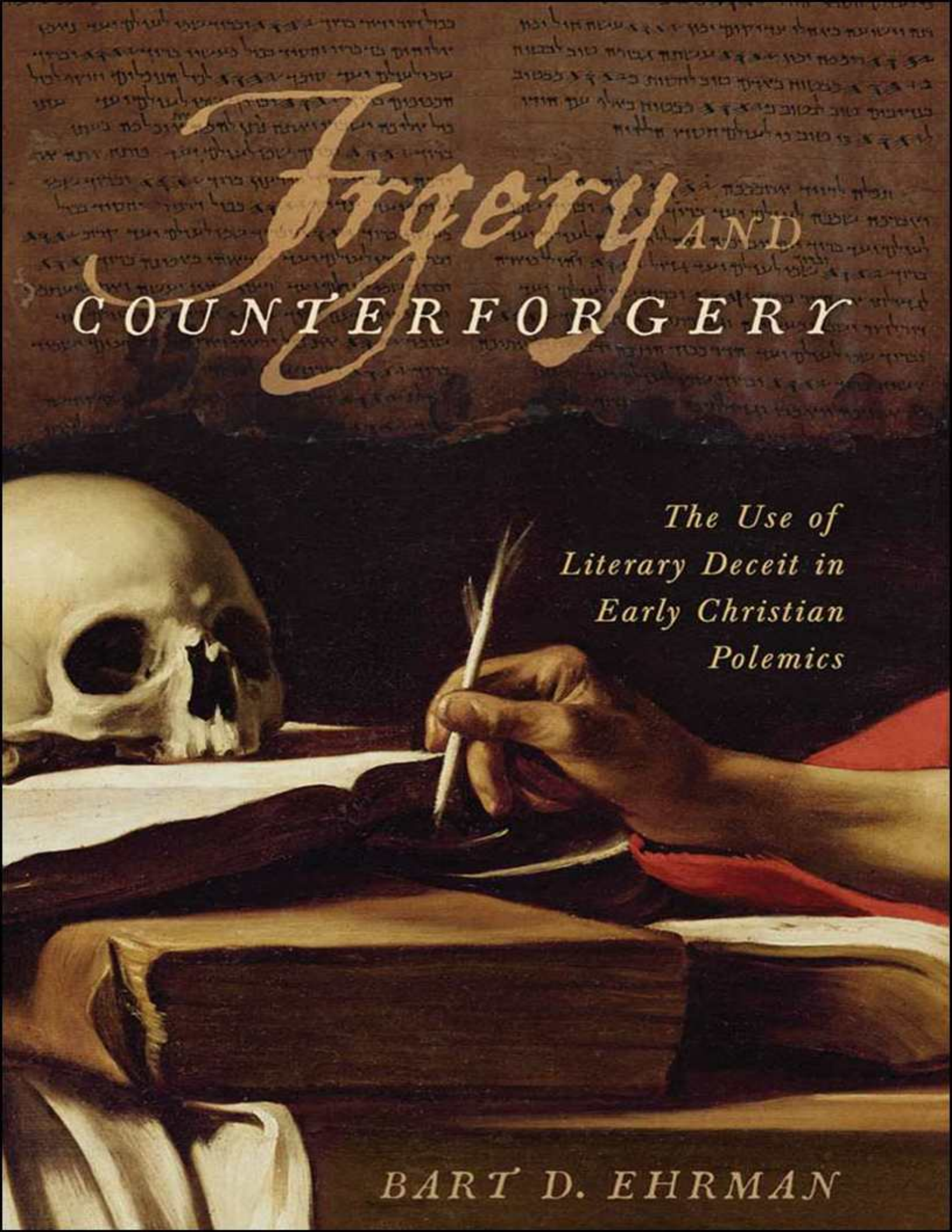

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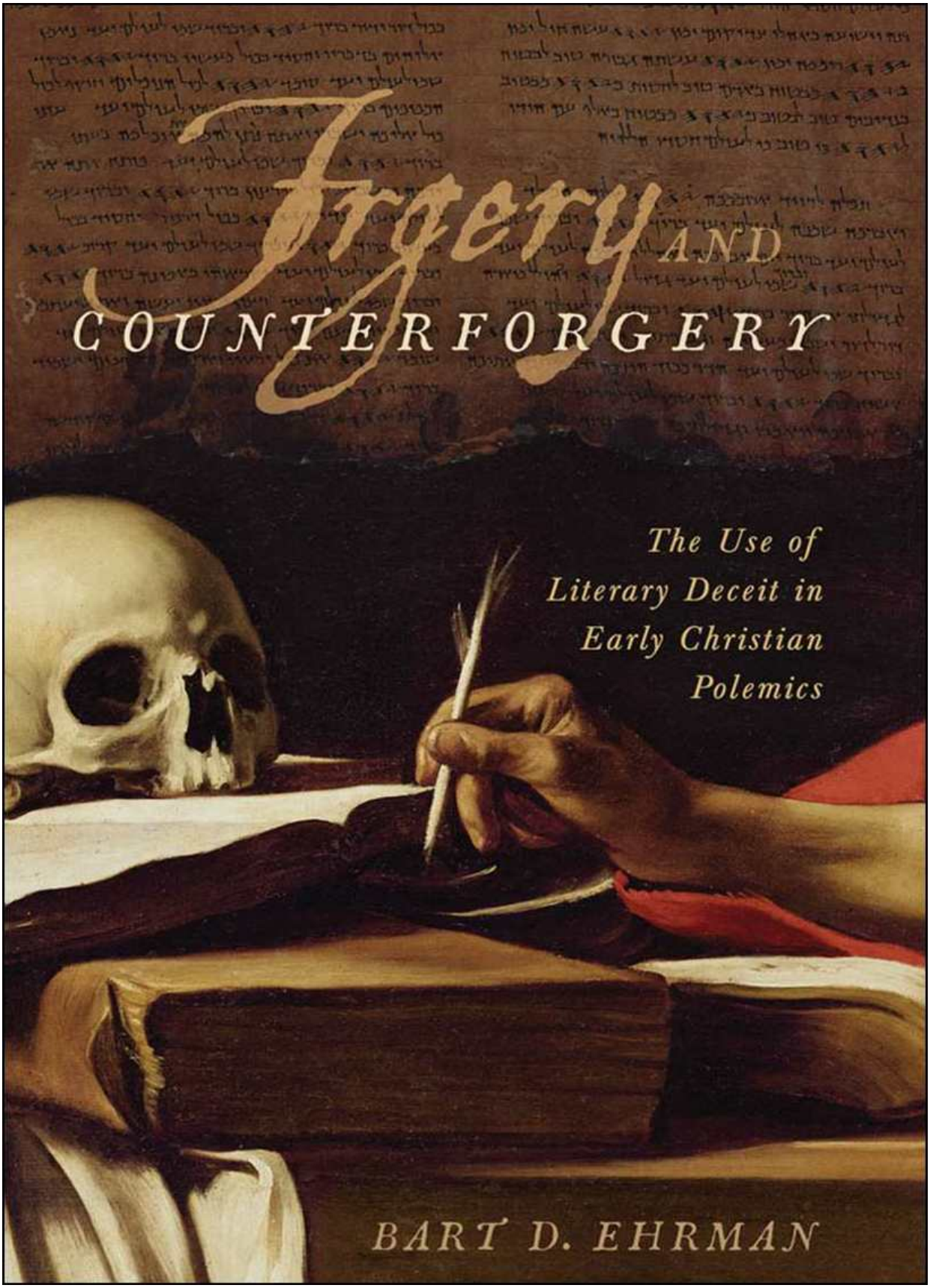
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CONTENTS

cknowledgments

. Introduction

PART I *Forgery in the Greco-Roman World*

. Forgers, Critics, and Deceived Deceivers

. Terms and Taxonomies

. Forgery in Antiquity: Aspects of the Broader Phenomenon

. Forgery in Antiquity: Motives, Techniques, Intentions, Justifications, and Criteria of Detection

PART II *Forgery in Early Christian Polemics*

. Introduction to Forgery and Counterforgery in Early Christian Polemics

. Early Pauline Forgeries Dealing with Eschatology

. Later Forgeries Dealing with Eschatology

. Forgeries in Support of Paul and His Authority

0. Forgeries in Opposition to Paul and His Message

1. Anti-Jewish Forgeries

2. Forgeries Involving Church Organization and Leadership

3. Forgeries Involving Debates over the Flesh

4. Forgeries Arising from Later Theological Controversies

5. Apologetic Forgeries

6. Lies and Deception in the Cause of Truth

Bibliography

Index of Ancient Sources

Index of Subjects

Index of Modern Scholars

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I became seriously interested in questions of literary forgery just over twenty years ago in the course of doing research for my book *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*. It occurred to me at the time that the scribal falsification of texts is in many ways analogous to the forgery of texts. In both instances a writer (whether a scribe or an author) places his own words under the authority of someone else. Moreover, both practices were widely discussed and condemned in antiquity. To pursue the matter, I devoured Wolfgang Speyer's seminal treatment, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*, a great book to which I have returned on a number of occasions in the two decades since. My debt to Speyer will be seen in the opening chapters of this book. It will be clear, however, that my study is altogether different, as I focus on the use of forgery in Christian polemics of the first four centuries.

Abbreviations are standard ones in the field; see, e.g., Patrick H. Alexander et al., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), pp. 89–153.

There remains the happy occasion to thank those who have helped me in my work. As always, I am endlessly grateful to and for my wife, Sarah Beck-with, a remarkable human being, scholar, and dialogue partner, without whom my work, not to mention my life, would be immeasurably impoverished. My thanks to the National Humanities Center, which awarded me a fellowship in 2009–10, allowing me to pursue this academic passion without interruption, in the daily company of other scholars pursuing theirs. My thanks to my brother, Radd Ehrman, professor of Classics at Kent State University, for occasional help on matters of Greek and Latin literature and culture. My thanks to members of the UNC-Duke "Christianity in Antiquity" reading group (CIA), and members of the Duke-UNC "Late Ancient Studies Reading Group," for vigorously discussing sundry aspects of the work. My thanks to Elizabeth Clark, friend and colleague in the Duke Department of Religion, and to Zlatko Plešе, friend and colleague at UNC, for incisive comments and invaluable assistance on several of the chapters.

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I am especially indebted to three colleagues who read every word of the manuscript and made innumerable corrections and suggestions: Andrew Jacobs at Scribbs College, Joel Marcus at Duke Divinity School, and Dale Martin at Yale University. The world would be a happier place if every author had such friends, colleagues, and readers. All remaining mistakes are, alas, mine.

In the penultimate draft of the book I had determined to leave all foreign language materials cited in isolated and block quotations in their original languages, reasoning that this was, after all, meant to be a work of scholarship. My readers (all of them, actually) insisted that this was a very bad idea. I have yielded to their pleas (in this one instance) and asked the aforementioned Maria Doerfler, her of many languages, to translate the quotations (principally German, but also French and some of the Latin). She has complied in a remarkable way, and I cannot say how much I owe her. In places I have altered her translations, and the final responsibility for their accuracy (or inaccuracy) is all mine. I have resituated the original language quotations themselves to the footnotes. Unless otherwise noted, the translations of Greek texts are mine, including those of the New Testament.

Finally, thanks are due to my close friend and longtime editor Robert Miller at Oxford University Press, who has willingly and eagerly come forth from his normal world of college publishing to take on the task of editing the book.

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FORGERY AND COUNTERFORGERY

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Arguably the most distinctive feature of the early Christian literature is the degree to which it was forged.[1] Even though the early Christians were devoted to the truth–or so their writings consistently claimed—and even though "authoritative" literature played a virtually unparalleled role in their individual and communal lives, the orthonymous output of the early Christians was remarkably, even astonishingly, meager. From the period of the New Testament, from which some thirty writings survive intact or in part, only eight go under the name of their actual author, and seven of these derive from the pen of one man.[2] To express the matter differently, only two authors named themselves correctly in the surviving literature of the first Christian century. All other Christian writings are either anonymous, falsely ascribed (based on an original anonymity or homonymity), or forged.

Matters begin to change with the second Christian century, even though orthonymity continues to be the exception rather than the rule. It is worth considering, for example, what Pre-Enlightenment scholars accepted as the writings of apostolic and subapostolic times.[3] There were the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* of Clement, now known not to be works of the one who was reputedly the fourth bishop of Rome, but to be forged in his name. There were the writings of the early Pauline convert Dionysius the Areopagite, also forged. There were the letters of Paul himself to and from Seneca, likewise forged. And there were the thirteen letters of Ignatius of Antioch, six of them forged and the others falsely and severely interpolated. When we move deeper into the second century and on into the third and fourth, we see a heightened interest in the production of "apostolic" works: Gospels by Peter, Thomas, Philip, all forged; Paul's letters to the Alexandrians and Laodiceans, forged; Jesus' correspondence with Abgar, forged; Apocalypses of Peter and Paul, forged. We can move backward into writings forged in the names of the greats from antiquity, Isaiah or the Sybil, or forward into the writings forged in the names of orthodox church fathers—Basil, Augustine, Jerome. The list goes a very long way.

Matching the abundant materials for the study of early Christian forgery is the remarkably sparse attention paid to it—as a broader phenomenon—in modern scholarship. Apart from studies of individual instances, which do indeed abound, and discussions of the relationship of pseudepigrapha to issues of canon, there is no full length study of the phenomenon in the English language, and only one reasonably comprehensive study in German.[4] There is none in any other language of scholarship.

The study of individual cases is, of course, crucial for the understanding of the broader phenomenon and so need continuously to be carried out with rigor and focus. But somewhat ironically, these examinations are often conducted precisely apart from a knowledge or appreciation of the wider phenomenon of early Christian forgery. Surely an individual instantiation of the practice cannot be studied in isolation, apart from its wider historical and cultural context.

The studies of forgery and canon are also vital in many ways, especially in assisting in the evaluation of the practices of and attitudes toward forgery in the early Christian tradition. Inevitably such studies draw on materials taken from the wider Jewish and pagan environments, often, though not always, with broad coverage and clarity of insight. But a focus on issues of canon can skew the discussion in certain ways, and there are other important questions that need to be addressed.

What are needed are fuller studies of the historical phenomenon, not only in relation to a set of theological concerns and not only with eyes focused on the early Christian forgeries that were eventually deemed to be Scripture. The canonical forgeries participated both in the broader stream of literary practices of antiquity and, more narrowly, in the literary practices of the early Christian communities. These broader practices should not be seen merely as background to the object of ultimate (theological) concern (the question of canon), but should be explored as a matter of intellectual inquiry in their own right. That is the intent and goal of the present study.

The focus of my concern will be the Christian literary forgeries of roughly the first four centuries CE. Later texts will be discussed only when they are in some way compelling, relevant, and especially noteworthy. In particular, for the purposes of this study, I am interested in forgeries that were engendered in the context of early Christian polemics. One could easily argue that these involve the majority of the relevant texts, but that statistical question is of no concern to me here. I am interested in polemics

because they played such a major role in the history and development of the early Christian tradition and, as a consequence, in the production of early Christian forgeries. We know of numerous polemical contexts from the early Christian centuries, of course, and I am not restricting my vision to just one of them. Christians engaged in conflicts with non-Christian Jews and with antagonistic pagans; most of the polemical contexts, however, were intramural. There were internecine disputes over legitimate authority and authority figures. There were arguments over church structure and hierarchy, offices, ritual, and discipline. There were abundant and heated disagreements over specific theological teachings, from early eschatological disputes to later Christological and Trinitarian controversies. In all these contexts unknown authors produced forgeries, in large measure to help secure victory over their opponents through the authority provided by an assumed authorial name. Some of these forgers were remarkably successful in deceiving their reading audiences. Most of the forgeries produced have been lost or destroyed. But a striking number have survived, some through manuscript traditions down through the ages, others by chance discoveries made by professional archaeologists or rummaging fellahin.

We cannot understand these polemical forgeries if we fail to situate them in their context within the deceptive literary practices of the environment, the broader Greco-Roman world, including the part of that world that comprised Judaism. The study needs, then, to be carried out in relationship to that context, and so, in the following four chapters, it will begin by asking a set of questions about the wider phenomenon, seeking what can be known about the intent, function, motivations, and techniques of Greek and Roman forgeries. We will also examine the attitudes toward the practice, toward specific instantiations of it, and toward those who engaged in it: Were they seen to be lying? Were there culturally available justifications for their deceits? We will also evaluate the methods of detection that were employed by ancient critics intent on uncovering forgery.

The rest of the book deals with Christian forgeries of the first four centuries that appear to have been generated in polemical contexts. I discuss some fifty instances. In many cases I evaluate the scholarly debates that the texts have engendered—debates, in particular, over whether or not the text in question is authentic or forged. But there is much more to the matter of forgery than a mere Dass, as recent scholarship on forgery has so valuably stressed.[5] That is to say, knowing *that* a book is forged is crucial, but only

as the beginning, not the end, of the investigation. Other—arguably even more important and interesting—questions involve such matters as the motivations and functions of the forgery. Why did an author choose to lie about his identity?[6] What was he trying to accomplish? How did the book he produced achieve his desired ends?

With respect to the first set of questions, whether or not a book is forged, I have taken three approaches in my analysis. Some books continue to be keenly debated among scholars (e.g., 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, James); for these I provide a full discussion of the range of issues that suggest that the book is in fact forged. Other instances are less open to dispute (e.g., 2 Peter, the Pseudo-Ignatians), and in such cases I will simply state the most compelling reasons that have persuaded the majority of scholars. Yet other instances require no case to be made at all, as they are recognized as forgeries, for compelling reasons, by all hands (e.g., the Gospel of Peter; Jesus' correspondence with Abgar; the Apostolic Constitutions). The ultimate goal of the study is not to determine if this, that, or the other writing is forged, but to examine the motivation and function of forgery, especially in polemical contexts.

In the course of my discussions I will be especially interested in a kind of subcategory of forgery that I am calling "counterforgery" (Gegenfälschung). This term occasionally appears in the scholarship in two senses, which are not usually differentiated cleanly. On one hand, in a most general sense, a counterforgery involves a forged writing that opposes a specific idea, doctrine, point of view, or practice. But that, by the nature of the case, is true of virtually all polemically driven forgeries. And so I also propose a more specific kind of counterforgery, that is, one designed to counter the ideas, doctrines, views, or perspectives found precisely in another forgery (whether or not the author of the counterforgery realized that the book being opposed was forged). The value of this subcategory of polemical forgery will become evident in the discussions of individual cases.

In many instances readers may suspect that the forgeries I consider functioned in ways other than polemical. To anticipate that objection, I should here stress that it is important to recognize the multifunctionality of forgeries, which corresponds to the multifunctionality of all literary texts. Few writings are produced for a solitary reason. If one were to ask why Paul wrote the letter now known as 1 Thessalonians, a number of perfectly

valid, but differing, responses could be given. He wrote it in order to resume relations with a community that he had founded and considered particularly dear; he wrote it to bring his apostolic presence into their midst while he was himself physically absent; he wrote it to remind his readers of the redemptive message they had earlier received; he wrote it to clarify the misunderstandings of some of the community concerning the nature of the eschatological gospel he had proclaimed; he wrote it to urge his readers to lead a life of high morality; and he probably wrote it for a handful of other reasons. It would be wrong to insist that he wrote the letter for just one reason, and it would be wrong to deny any one of these being the reason (or one of the reasons) he wrote it.

So too with forgeries in Paul's name, or the names of any of the famous figures from early Christianity. Rarely, if ever, do they fulfill just one purpose or serve just one function. They may serve several, possibly unrelated to one another. To take one obvious example, the Protevangelium Jacobi. The author calls himself James, and he almost certainly is claiming to be "that" James—the brother of Jesus, who, according to the account itself, would have been the son of Joseph from a previous marriage, that is, Jesus' older step brother. This, of course, would put him in a particularly strong position to tell the prehistory of Jesus' appearance in the world, which forms the subject for the bulk of the narrative. But why did the author write the account? In fact, the (forged) work may well have functioned on numerous levels. It may have been written to provide readers an entertaining account of the prehistory of Jesus' birth and of its immediate aftermath. It may have been produced to celebrate the greatness of the mother of God. More than that, it may have been created in order to answer pagan opponents of Christianity such as Celsus (and the fabricated claims of his "Jew"), by showing that the charges they leveled against Mary (a peasant girl who had to spin for a living), Joseph (a poor common laborer), and the child Jesus (born into poverty) were precisely wrong. But there is more. Against adoptionist Christians the account shows that Jesus was in fact the Son of God from his birth; and against Marcionites it shows that Jesus actually came into the world as a child—that he did not simply descend from heaven, fully grown, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. The text, in other words, functions on a number of fronts in the proto-orthodox attempt to establish itself and its views in the face of opponents, Jewish, pagan, and heterodox Christian. Was it written to deal with just one

set of problems? Possibly so. But it is virtually impossible to say, without having the author available to interview, since features of the account successfully counter the claims of this, that, or the other opponent of the proto-orthodox.

Finally, in view of my ultimate concerns in this study, I should emphasize what I will *not* be addressing here:

I will not be discussing literary texts that have been taken by some scholars to be forgeries but that I consider to be authentic. Thus, for example, I will certainly be dealing with the fourth-century Pseudo-Ignatian letters, but I will not be discussing the seven letters of the Middle Recension, even though there is a history—some of it quite recent—of taking these letters also as forgeries. I do not find the recent arguments of Hübner and Lechner to be any more persuasive than the older arguments by Weijenborg, Joly, and Rius Camps on the matter[7]; I think the seven letters are authentic, and so I will not be discussing them as polemical forgeries.

I will not be examining pseudepigrapha that are not Christian in origin but came to be transmitted, cherished, and sometimes also altered by Christians as part of their literature (e.g., the Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve).[8]

I will not by and large be considering polemical forgeries from after the fourth century (e.g., Pseudo-Titus; the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea).

I will not be considering forgeries that are not polemical in some obvious way (e.g., the Prayer of the Apostle Paul or a number of other nonpolemical pseudepigrapha of the Nag Hammadi Library).

Conversely, I will not be considering polemical works that are not forgeries (the Nag Hammadi Testimony of Truth, for example, makes no authorial claim).

I will not be considering books that are no longer extant, in full or in part.

I will not, for the most part, be considering falsely attributed books (since their authors made no false authorial claims: so, for example, the New Testament Gospels; the Epistle of Barnabas; Pseudo-Justin; Pseudo-Tertullian; etc.).

I will not, with a few key exceptions in passing (such as the Sibylline Oracles and the Pseudo-Ignatians), be considering the closely related

matter of false interpolations (e.g., in the writings of the New Testament).

I will not be considering ancient instances of plagiarism, unless they have something to do with forgeries (e.g., possibly, 2 Peter).

I should stress that the preceding topics are all important and deserve full examination. But in this study, I will be restricting myself to books whose authors appear to make false authorial claims, for polemical purposes, within the Christian tradition of the first four Christian centuries.

Finally, I want to take special care to circumvent a possible misreading of my study, which would think or claim that I am trying to advance some kind of positivist agenda in promoting one kind of Christian thought and its literature over another. When I call a text forged I am making a literary-historical claim about its author; I do not mean to imply any kind of value judgment concerning its content or its merit as a literary text (religious, theological, ethical, personal, or any other kind of merit). In particular, I am not claiming that it is somehow inferior in these ways to a work that is orthonymous. I am not, that is, contrasting later forged texts with texts that are somehow pristine, "original," and therefore better or more worthy of our attention.

Another way to express this caveat is this: my ultimate concerns do not lie (at least in this study) with theological or ontological questions of ultimate truth, but in historical questions about how Christianity developed as a religion. From a historical perspective—just to take an example—writings that were actually written by Paul were themselves products of their time, based on things Paul heard, experienced, and thought, just as were the writings produced by others in his name. As a historian I do not value the authentically Pauline writings any more or less than later "Pauline" writings that were forged.

1. I will be defining the term *forgery*, and related terms, soon, and justify the way I will be using them. See pp. 29–32. For now it is enough to state my general conception. A "forgery" is a literary work with a false authorial claim, that is, a writing whose author falsely claims to be a(nother) well-known person.

2. I am excluding for now the writings of Ignatius from this tally; were he to be considered—on the grounds that he probably wrote prior to the

appearance of 2 Peter—then seven additional works and one additional author would be added to the totals.

3. See further, R. M. Grant, "The Appeal to the Early Fathers," *JTS* 11 (1960): 13–24.

4. Wolfgang Speyer's rightly famous *vade mecum, Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum: Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung* (München: Beck, 1971). It is now, obviously, over forty years old, but nothing has come along to replace or even to supplement it.

5. See especially the recent collection of essays edited by Jörg Frey, Jens Herzer, Martina Janssen, and Clare K. Rothschild, *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*. WUNT 246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

6. That forgers were consciously lying about their identity in an effort to deceive their readers will be the burden of much of the following four chapters; in particular see pp. 128–32.

7. Thomas Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos? Chronologische und theologiegeschichtliche Studien zu den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochen*, VCSup 47 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); R. M. Hübner, "Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius Antiochien," *ZAC* 1 (1997): 44–72; Reinoud Weijenborg, *Les lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche* (Leiden: Brill, 1969); Robert Joly, *Le Dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche*, Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres 69 (Brussels: Éditions de l'université de Bruxelles, 1979); Josep Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1979). For responses, see Caroline Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," *JTS* n.s. 33 (1982): 66–97; Mark J. Edwards, "Ignatius and the Second Century: An Answer to R Hübner," *ZAC* 2 (1998): 214–26; and Andreas Lindemann, "Antwort auf die 'Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien'," *ZAC* 1 (1997): 185–95.

8. See, for example, M. de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). The only exceptions to my rule—e.g., the Sibylline Oracles—involve corpora that include originally Christian productions as well.

PART I

Forgery in the Greco-Roman World

CHAPTER TWO

Forgers, Critics, and Deceived Deceivers

I begin with a series of anecdotes that establish some of the themes pursued throughout the course of my study. These historical narratives involve forgers who condemned forgery and deceivers who were deceived.

HERACLIDES AND DIONYSIUS

Heraclides Ponticus was one of the great literati of the classical age.[1] As a young man from aristocratic roots, he left his native Pontus to study philosophy in Athens under Plato, Speusippus, and eventually, while he was still in the Academy, Aristotle. During one of Plato's absences, Heraclides was temporarily put in charge of the school; after the death of Speusippus he was nearly appointed permanent head. His writings spanned a remarkable range, from ethics to dialectics to geometry to physics to astronomy to music to history to literary criticism. Diogenes Laertius lists more than sixty books in all. Ten more are known from other sources. Few texts remain, almost entirely in fragments.

Diogenes is our principal source of information outside the primary texts.[2] As is his occasional wont, he betrays much greater interest in regaling readers with amusing anecdotes than in describing Heraclides' contributions to the intellectual world of his day.[3] And so we are told that Heraclides' penchant for fine clothing and good food, which produced a noticeably corpulent figure, earning for him the epithet Heraclides Pompicus.

Of particular interest to Diogenes are instances in which Heraclides was involved in conscious deception. At one point, Heraclides had fallen desperately, even, he thought, mortally ill. Concerned for his postmortem reputation, he entrusted a family servant with the ploy. Feigning his death, he arranged for his pet snake to be placed, instead of his (not yet deceased)

corpse, under the cover of the funeral bier; at the internment, those attending his funeral would take the appearance of the sacred snake as a sign that Heraclides had been bodily assumed into the realm of the gods. The plot failed, as it turns out; the snake prematurely slithered out from cover during the funeral procession, and it was immediately recognized that the entire proceeding had been a ruse. Heraclides was discovered, and, in the event, he was destined to live on, with more deceits in store.

This near-death experience is paired, by Diogenes, with an episode that did end Heraclides' life. When the region of Heraclea was suffering a famine, its citizens sent to the priestess at the oracle of Pythia to learn what they were to do in order to regain divine favor. Heraclides bribed the envoys and the oracular priestess herself to publish a fake prophecy: the Heracleans' plight would be resolved when they installed Heraclides as royalty with a golden crown, and vowed to bestow upon him honors worthy of a hero at his death. The citizens took the fabricated oracle to heart, but the falsity of the envoys and priestess was soon uncovered: when Heraclides was crowned as directed in the theater he was struck by a fit of apoplexy and died, thwarted in his desire for posthumous honors. The envoys were stoned to death, and the priestess was later dispatched by a poisonous snake at her shrine.

Even at the height of his career, the Diogenic Heraclides was involved in scandal. His literary treatise dealing with Homer and Hesiod was shown to be a bald plagiarism. And he committed forgery, according to the musician Aristoxenus, who claimed that Heraclides composed tragic plays in the name of Thespis. Richard Bentley was the first to argue that the few surviving fragments of Thespis are in fact Heraclidean inventions.[4]

What Heraclides is best known for, however, is an instance of deceit in which he was the victim rather than the culprit. This involves arguably the most famous instance of mischievous forgery in the history of the practice, Heraclides' deception at the hands of his former student Dionysius (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 5.92–93).

Dionysius Spintharos ("the Spark") earned the epithet Metathemenos, the Renegade, in his old age, after a severe illness effectively disabused him of his lifelong Stoic view that pain, which is morally neutral, cannot therefore be considered evil.[5] According to Diogenes, earlier in life Dionysius played a trick on his former teacher, by forging a play called the *Parthenopaeus* in the name of Sophocles. In one of his works of literary

criticism, Heraclides drew on the play, citing it as authentically Sophoclean. But Dionysius then informed him that in fact the play was a forgery, perpetrated by none other than himself. Heraclides refused to believe it, and so Dionysius brought forth evidence: at the opening of the play, the first letters in a group of lines formed an acrostic, "Pankalus," the name of Dionysius' own lover.

Heraclides insisted that the matter was a coincidence, until Dionysius brought forth two additional and yet more convincing proofs. The first was a subsequent acrostic that said, "An old monkey is not captured by a trap; yes, it is captured, but it is captured after some time." The final acrostic was irrefutable: Ἡρακλείδης γράμματα οὐκ ἐπίσταται οὐδ' ἠσχύνθη (Heraclides does not know letters, and is not ashamed).[6]

Diogenes' passage has generated some scholarly discussion. In his edition of the fragments of the philosophers of the Aristotelian school, F. Wehrli gives reasons to think it was not the *Parthenopaeus* that was fabricated, but Diogenes' anecdote itself.[7] The story may be humorous and clever, but for the acrostics to have worked, Wehrli argues, Dionysius would have had to be relatively certain that Heraclides in particular would be deceived and make a public display of his ignorance.

Wehrli makes a strong point but perhaps is not completely suasive. Two of the three acrostics have no explicit connection to Heraclides; the other could just as easily have been placed in the text to satisfy Dionysius' rather scandalous sense of humor. If so, Heraclides just happened to step into a trap particularly suited for his corpulent frame.[8]

In any event, this is not the only instance of roguish forgery from the ancient world, designed to bamboozle an intellectual opponent. Galen indicates that Lucian decided to ridicule a much beloved, but unnamed, philosopher whom he considered a braggart and did so by penning an obscure and senseless philosophical treatise in the name of Heraclides. He had it presented to his enemy for an interpretation. When he complied, Lucian turned the tables, mocking him for being unable to see through the swindle.[9]

More to my purpose here, however, is the pure irony of Diogenes' own Heraclides. In a game of intellectual boomerang, the one who is guilty of swindles, lies, plagiarism, and forgery—in a word, deceit—is himself a victim of deceit. The deceiver is deceived.

THE IRONIES OF THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

This ironic phenomenon has its rough parallels in the later Christian tradition. To begin with, we might look at a work universally recognized as pseudepigraphic, the late-fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions, a "church order" allegedly written by none other than the apostles of Jesus (hence its name) but in reality produced by someone simply claiming to be the apostolic band, living three hundred years after they had been laid to rest in their respective tombs.

We will be considering other aspects of this text in a later chapter.[10] For now it is enough to note that the book represents an edited composite of three earlier documents still extant independently, the third-century Didascalia Apostolorum, which makes up books 1–6 of the composite text; the Didache, which is found in book 7; and the Apostolic Tradition, wrongly attributed to Hippolytus, in book 8. Since this author has taken over earlier writings without acknowledgment, he could well be considered a plagiarist by ancient, as well as modern, standards. Consider, for example, the words of Vitruvius:

> While, then, these men deserve our gratitude, on the other hand we must censure those who plunder their works and appropriate them to themselves; writers who do not depend upon their own ideas, but in their envy boast of other men's goods whom they have robbed with violence, should not only receive censure but punishment for their impious way of life.[11]

In absolving our unknown compiler of the charge, it might be observed that plagiarism involves an author passing off someone else's work as his own, whereas in the case of the Apostolic Constitutions the author does not claim that *any* of the work is his own. He claims instead that it is the writing of the apostles. Ancient critics would certainly have considered the work a forgery, but it is not clear if they would have considered it a plagiarism.

As to the charge of forgery, it is worth observing that unlike the earliest of the borrowed documents, the Didache, the Apostolic Constitutions does not claim merely to stand in the apostolic tradition or to present a correct understanding of the teachings of the apostles. It claims to be written by the apostles. To this end, although the three earlier "church orders" are taken

over more or less wholesale, some important editing has taken place. The Apostolic Constitutions begins by naming its authors as "the apostles and elders."[12] As in the Didascalia, lying behind chapters 1–6, the apostles appear only rarely until toward the end; in 6.8, for example, the author reverts to a first-person plural "we went forth among the gentiles" and then to a first-person discourse in the name of Peter (6.9). The fourteen authors name themselves in 6.14 (the eleven disciples, Matthias the replacement of Judas, James the brother of Jesus, and the apostle Paul); in 6.12 they speak of themselves as the "twelve"—the original eleven and Matthias; elsewhere, on two occasions, Clement is added to the list. Moreover, the authorial fiction is inserted into the source documents at the very beginning of both book 7 ("We also, having followed our teacher Christ … are obliged to say that there are two ways") and book 8 ("Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, delivered to us the great mystery of piety.… These gifts were first given to us the apostles when we were about to proclaim the gospel").

More remarkably, starting in 8.16, certain directives for church offices are made in the first-person singular: "With respect to the ordination of deacons, I Philip make this constitution.… With respect to a deaconess, I Bartholomew make this constitution.… With respect to the sub-deacons, I Thomas make this constitution.…" And so on, in the names of other apostles. As Bruno Steimer has pointed out, only rarely does the author slip up and betray the pseudepigraphic character of his writing: James, one of the speakers (8.35.1), is said already to be dead (7.46.1–2); Peter both speaks in the first person and is spoken of in the third (7.11, but 2.24.4; 7.2.12); Paul is sometimes not included in the assembly (e.g., 2.55.1); and in one place, at least, Peter and Paul seem to differentiate themselves from the apostles (8.33.8).[13]

It is frequently stated that the Apostolic Constitutions claims as its ultimate author Clement of Rome, who allegedly is writing the words given him by the apostles.[14] This, however, is almost certainly wrong. Clement is not mentioned at the beginning of the book when the author addresses the readers in the names of the apostles, or in the beginning of any of the books' three main sections. He does appear twice in the first person (8.46.13; 8.47.85), and so he has been inserted as a co-author of sorts. But he is not the ultimate writer of the document. The passages that have been appealed to in support of a Clementine authorship are 6.18.11, where "the Catholic doctrine" is said to have been sent διὰ τοῦ συλλειτουργοῦ Κλήμεντος;

and again at the end the book at 8.47.85, where the writing is self-referentially said to have been addressed to the bishops δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Κλήμεντος. The book is clearly written "through Clement." But this does not mean that Clement is the one recording the words of the apostles. It means he is being imagined as the one who carried the book to the recipients and who could, then, vouch for both its authenticity, as having been written by the apostles, and its accuracy.[15]

The Apostolic Constitutions, then, tries to pass itself off as an authentically apostolic writing, even though it is not. This is a clear case of what I will later be defining as literary forgery: a writing that makes a false authorial claim, with the apparent intention of deceiving its readers.[16] A range of ironies emerge from this text as a result. One intriguing passage occurs in 8.3, where the author not only stresses his apostolic identity but also draws for his readers the ineluctable conclusion, in case they were too dense to catch it: "the one who hears us hears Christ, and the one who hears Christ hears his God and Father." What would it mean, then, to disobey the apostolic instructions of the book? The reader can draw her own conclusion.

At the same time, this authorial authority, rooted in a direct apostolic line heading straight to God, is rooted in a falsehood. The book is pseudepigraphic—literally, "inscribed with a lie." This makes the claim of apostolic succession all the more interesting, as the claim appears immediately after the author's reminder of how God "rebuked the way of those who … attempted to speak lies" (τῶν ψευδῆ ἐπιχειρούντων λέγειν . . . ἤλεγξε τὸν τρόπον; 8.3.1). Here a liar condemns the telling of lies.[17]

What is more, as with Heraclides Ponticus, here too the deceiver has been deceived. The alleged authors—the apostles of Christ, including Paul and James—claim that the books of the New Testament were theirs: ἡμέτερα δέ, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης (8.47.85). And so the author gives a list of which books those are, a list including all the books that eventually became the New Testament, with the exception of the book of Revelation. Strikingly, after listing the Gospels and the letters of Paul, James, John, Jude, and Peter, the author indicates that the New Testament is also to include the two letters of Clement and, to cap it all off, the Apostolic Constitutions themselves. The list ends with "our Acts of the Apostles"

αἱ Πράξεις ἡμῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων (8.47.85)—in other words, not just the letters that the authors had earlier produced but also the account of their activities.

By naming 1 and 2 Clement as scriptural authorities—part of "our" New Testament—the alleged authors are establishing the authority of the bearer of their writing, Clement of Rome, companion of the apostles. Including their own writing, the Apostolic Constitutions, as Scripture is the natural corollary of the pseudepigraphic enterprise. If they wrote the other books of the New Testament, then surely their other writing—that is, the present one—is also sacred scripture. This is pseudepigraphy with chutzpah. The author is not just forging an apostolic writing; he is urging, in the name of the apostles, that the writing be deemed part of Scripture.[18] At the same time, to some extent this author is simply making explicit what other forgers clearly desired implicitly. Whoever wrote the extant letter of Laodiceans, the letter of 3 Corinthians, and the Gospel of Peter clearly expected their readers to accept their books as authentically apostolic and thus, surely, in some sense scriptural.

But, as intimated, the author of the Apostolic Constitutions is not only a deceiver; he is also deceived—in this case, about many of the books of the New Testament, which he did not in fact write but which were also, for that matter, not written by the apostolic authorities who are claimed as their authors. In making this mistake, our unknown author can certainly be excused. Virtually all Christians by the end of the fourth century assumed that the New Testament books were authentic; little did they know that the writings of Paul and the letters of Peter, James, and Jude would all come under criticism so many centuries later. All the same, here again we have a forger who has been fooled by other forgeries.[19]

What is yet more striking is that in two places this self-conscious pseudepigrapher explicitly condemns what he practices, insisting that his readers not read other forgeries. The first passage is in 6.16.1:

> We have sent all these things to you so that you might be able to know what our opinion is. And do not receive the books that have been patched together in our name by the ungodly. For you are not to pay heed to the names of the apostles, but to the nature of the things and to their undistorted opinions.

The author goes on to mention books forged by the false teachers Simon and Cleobius[20] and their followers, who have "compiled poisonous books in the name of Christ and of his disciples," written in order to deceive others. He also speaks of "apocryphal books" written by the ancients, in the names of Moses, Enoch, Adam, Isaiah, David, and so on, that are "pernicious and alien to the truth," and he indicates that other "ill-named" persons have done so as well, writing books that malign the creation, marriage, providence, having children, the Law, and the prophets.

It is true, as J. Mueller has recently observed, that the author is not precisely condemning his own practice; he objects to heretical and apocryphal forgeries specifically because they teach false notions.[21] His own book, in his opinion, teaches the truth, something (for him) quite different. But it is also important to consider the issue in a wider perspective. His opponents—the ones who forged heretical books—would have seen the matter in just the opposite light and no doubt asserted that their views were apostolic whereas his were pernicious and poisonous. It is not up to the historian to adjudicate this theological dispute. Still, it is worth noting that the fact of the author even raising the issue of apostolic pseudepigrapha shows he is fully conscious of the circumstance of authors falsely writing in the name of apostles when he is doing so himself. And so the view of Steimer seems completely justified: "By adding a criterion for determining authenticity to his critique of forgery, the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions avoids submitting his own work to the verdict that he himself has formulated. The criterion for authenticity provides him with a suitable means to polemicize as a forger against forgery."[22]

The second instance is 8.47.60, which condemns in no uncertain terms "anyone who publicly displays the pseudepigraphic books of the impious τὰ ψευδεπίγραφα βιβλία τῶν ἀσεβῶν in the church." Once more the author is principally concerned with forgeries that he judges to be heretical. And here again, the author opposes "pseudepigraphic books" of the heretics, without having any problem producing a pseudepigraphic book of his own. Among other things, as we will see, this kind of warning against forgeries proved to be a powerful tool in the hands of a forger, as it served, among other things, to throw the reader off the scent of his own deceit, as recognized, again, by Steimer.[23]

What we have here in the Apostolic Constitutions, then, is not only a liar who condemns lying and a deceiver who is himself deceived; we also have a forger who condemns forgeries. His own forgery, in any event, was spectacularly successful. Later orthodox church leaders took him seriously when he claimed to be the apostolic band. From three centuries further on, for example, the so-called Trullan Council of 692 accepted as fully authoritative the eighty-five Apostolic Canons, which appear in 8.47 of the book. The rest of the Apostolic Constitutions was treated by the council as suspect, not because it was forged but because later heretics obviously intercepted the text and interpolated false passages into it. And so, as Canon 2 of the council reads:

> It has also seemed good to this holy Council, that the eighty-five canons, received and ratified by the holy and blessed Fathers before us, and also handed down to us in the name of the holy and glorious Apostles should from this time forth remain firm and unshaken for the cure of souls and the healing of disorders. And in these canons we are bidden to receive the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles [written] by Clement. But formerly through the agency of those who erred from the faith certain adulterous matter was introduced, clean contrary to piety, for the polluting of the Church, which obscures the elegance and beauty of the divine decrees in their present form. We therefore reject these Constitutions so as the better to make sure of the edification and security of the most Christian flock; by no means admitting the offspring of heretical error, and cleaving to the pure and perfect doctrine of the Apostles.[24]

THE FABRICATIONS OF EPIPHANIUS

As a further example of a forger who perpetrated a fraud, we might consider the work of a contemporary of the author of the Apostolic Constitutions, the doughty defender of the apostolic faith, Epiphanius of Salamis. Throughout his major work, the *Panarion*, an eighty-chapter refutation of all things heretical, Jewish and Christian, Epiphanius repeatedly demeans his opponents for using forged and apocryphal books. Nowhere is he more explicit in his condemnations than in his attack in book 26 on the

Phibionites (known also as Gnostics and Borborites; he gives them numerous names). Among the false and forged books that this heretical sect used, Epiphanius explicitly condemns a book called Noriah, the Gospel of Perfection, the Gospel of Eve, the Lesser Questions of Mary, the Greater Questions of Mary, the Books of Seth, Apocalypses of Adam, the Birth of Mary, and the Gospel of Philip. Many of these books are now lost, although we do have still today an Apocalypse of Adam, the Gospel of Philip, the Birth of Mary (= Protevangelium Jacobi), and the Second Treatise of the Great Seth. Whether the extant versions are the books Epiphanius had in mind is anyone's guess.

Epiphanius is particularly well informed about the Phibionites and their literature, he tells us, because as a young man he was nearly seduced—literally—into their sect. According to his autobiographical, yet imaginative, account, as a young man he was approached by two attractive women who urged him to join with them in their sectarian worship, which, as we will see, was anything but sanctified (from Epiphanius' perspective). He nearly succumbed but in the end managed to escape their clutches, and he reported to the authorities what they were doing. The authorities went on a search and dispelled the band.

In the course of his near seduction, Epiphanius tells us, he managed to procure and read a number of the Phibionites' sacred books. One that particularly struck him was the Greater Questions of Mary, from which he quotes a passage in order to highlight its extraordinary, not to say completely scandalous, character. The passage concerns an encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene and replicates in Gospel form the interests and activities of the Phibionites who had allegedly forged it:

> For in the book called The Greater Questions of Mary (they have also forged one called the Lesser), they indicate that he [Jesus] gave a revelation to her [Mary]. Taking her to the mountain he prayed and then extracted a woman from his side and began having sexual intercourse with her; then he gathered his semen in his hand, explaining that "This is what we must do in order to live." When Mary became disturbed and fell to the ground, he again raised her and said to her, "Why do you doubt, you of little faith?"[25]

Epiphanius need only cite this passage to show how outrageous it was as a forgery and how implausible it was as an account from the life of Jesus. But one might wonder how plausible it is even as a Phibionite account of Jesus. Is it possible that the account was forged not by the Phibionites but by Epiphanius himself? There are in fact reasons for thinking that Epiphanius invented both the book and the episode.

The place to begin is with Epiphanius' detailed explanation of the scurrilous ritual activities of the Phibionites, which he narrates with scarcely shrouded voyeuristic pleasure. For their periodic Eucharistic celebrations, Epiphanius tells us, the Phibionite devotees came together to enjoy a sumptuous meal. When they arrived at the place of meeting, they greeted one another with a secret handshake, tickling the palm underneath, presumably to assure one another that they were legitimately part of the group, but perhaps also to set the stage for the intimacies to follow. After gorging themselves, the men and women matched up, each with someone other than their own spouse, in order to have indiscriminate sex together. But when the man reached climax, Epiphanius indicates, he would withdraw from the woman. They would then collect his semen in their hands and eat it, saying "This is the body of Christ." If the woman was in her period, they would also collect some of her menstrual blood and consume it, saying "This is the blood of Christ."

If, despite the ordained coitus interruptus, a woman by chance became pregnant, the group would perform a ceremonial abortion; they then cut up the fetus and ate it communally as a special Eucharistic meal.

Epiphanius also tells us that the Phibionite men who had advanced to roles of leadership no longer required women for their periodic celebrations. They are said to have engaged in sacred homosexual activities. Moreover, some members of the group practiced holy masturbation, consuming the body of Christ in the privacy of their own homes. This practice was justified by an appeal to Scripture: "Working with your own hands, that you may have something to give also to those in need."

According to Epiphanius, the Phibionites' ritual activities were closely tied to the theological views of the group. They are said to have believed that this world is separated from the divine realm by 365 heavens, each of them controlled by an archon who must be placated in order to allow the soul to rise through his realm. Since the soul first descended through all 365 heavens and then must reascend, it must pass by all the archons, twice. The

journey occurred proleptically here on earth through a kind of empathy, as the man, during the course of the nocturnal sex liturgy, called out the secret name of one of the ruling archons, effecting a kind of identification with him that allowed safe passage through his realm. Since each archon must be passed by twice, as Epiphanius is quick to point out, each of the Phibionite men could expect to seduce female devotees on at least 730 festal occasions.

There was another link between the Phibionites' ritual activities and their theological system. Like other Gnostic groups, the Phibionites believed that human bodies were places of imprisonment for seeds of the divine, and the goal of the religion was to set the seed free. Since the seed comes to be implanted in the body through the sex act—literally in the exchange of bodily fluids—then the fluids were to be collected and consumed as an image of ultimate reunification. When, however, the seed was left inside the woman and a new body was formed, this allowed for the generation of another place of imprisonment. The fetus then was to be aborted in order to thwart the divinities keen on maintaining the system of entrapment. And so, whereas procreation defeated the true goal of existence and led to further entrapment and bondage, the ritualistic ingestion of semen, menses, and the occasional fetus provided liberation.

The Great Questions of Mary helped provide a textual basis—from the life of Jesus—for the ritual practices of the group. But did such a text actually exist?

The prior question is whether Epiphanius' description of the activities of the group is at all plausible. Historians have long treated Epiphanius in general with a healthy dose of skepticism.[26] No patristic source is filled with more invective and distortion; Epiphanius frequently makes connections between historical events that we otherwise know are unrelated, and he expressly claims to write horrific accounts precisely in order to repulse his readers from the heresies he describes (Pan. Proem. I. 2). His description of the Phibionites and their sex rituals, nonetheless, has been taken as historically grounded by a dismaying number of competent scholars. For Stephen Gero, the fact that other heresiological sources down into the Middle Ages mention the group (which he calls the Borborites) and level charges of immorality against them indicates that they did indeed exist and that they were indeed immoral.[27] But surely the perdurance of traditional slander is not the best gauge of historical veracity. So too

Stephen Benko argues that the close ties between the ritual activities of the group and their theological views show that the account of Epiphanius is entirely plausible.[28] But this overlooks that it is Epiphanius himself who establishes the linkage, which may just as well show that he has invented a set of scandalous rituals imagined as appropriate to the nefarious theology of the group. How would we know?

One obvious place to start is with Epiphanius' sources of information. Because he had some contact with the group as a young man—was nearly seduced into it—it is sometimes claimed that he had special access to their liturgical practices. But this is scarcely plausible. Epiphanius indicates that he spurned the advances of the two attractive Phibionite women *before* being drawn into their orb. This must mean that he was never present for any of the ritual activities. And it defies belief that missionaries would inform outsiders about the scandalous and reprehensible activities of the group before they were admitted into the inner circle. Potential converts were not likely to be won over by accounts of ritualistic consumption of fetuses.

Epiphanius stands in a long line of Christian heresiologists who claimed that their opponents, especially Gnostics, subscribed to impenetrable and ridiculous mythological understandings of the world while engaging in outrageous and scurrilous behavior, all as part of their religion.[29] As far back as Irenaeus, two centuries earlier, we learn of Valentinians who allegedly taught that those who possess the divine seed should give their spirit to spiritual things and their flesh to fleshly things, so that indiscriminate copulation was not only permissible but a *desideratum* for the pneumatichoi (*Adv. Haer*. I. 6.3–4); the Carpocratians are said to have practiced indiscriminate sex, and indeed their theology compelled them to violate every conceivable moral law and ethical norm so as to avoid being reincarnated ad infinitum (I.25.4); the heretic Marcus reportedly excited attractive women by inspiring them to speak in tongues, after which they became putty in his lascivious hands (I.13.3). Maligning the Other for sexual offenses was de rigueur among orthodox heresiologists.

And this is not the ammunition simply of Christian heresy hunters: throughout antiquity it was standard polemical fare to charge one's opponents with the most nefarious of crimes against nature and humanity, in particular indiscriminate sex, infanticide, and cannibalism. The Christians were charged with such activities by pagans such as Fronto, tutor

to Marcus Aurelius, and by Jews such as the one introduced, or rather imagined, by Celsus. Jews had to fend off charges by pagan antagonists; pagans describe comparable activities in play among other pagans.[30]

That the polemic is standard should always give one pause in the face of any particular instantiation of it. But with groups of Gnostics we are on particularly thorny ground. The proto-orthodox heresiologists uniformly assumed that since various Gnostic groups demeaned the material world and bodily existence within it, they had no difficulty in demeaning the body. Moreover, since for Gnostics the body was irrelevant for ultimate salvation, reasoned the heresiologists, then the body could be used and abused at will. And so, for their opponents, the Gnostics engaged in all sorts of reprehensible bodily activities, precisely to demonstrate their antimaterialist theology.

This heresiological commonplace has been effectively refuted in modern times. The one thing the Nag Hammadi library has shown about Gnostic ethics is that the heresiologists from Irenaeus (and no doubt before) to Epiphanius (and certainly after) got the matter precisely wrong. Many Gnostic groups did devalue the body. But that did not lead them to flagrant acts of immorality. On the contrary, since the body was the enemy and was to be escaped, the body was to be treated harshly. One was not to indulge in the pleasures of the flesh precisely because the goal was to escape the trappings of the flesh. The Nag Hammadi treatises embody a decidedly ascetic ideal, just the opposite of what one would expect from reading the polemics of the proto-orthodox and orthodox heresiologists.[31]

Which takes us back to Epiphanius and his Greater Questions of Mary. Epiphanius, as we have seen, does claim to have read the Phibionites' literature, and this claim is sometimes taken to substantiate his account, even though he himself both provides the account and makes the claim. Here as always Epiphanius must be taken with a pound of salt. The books of the Phibionites could not have been widely circulated outside the group —at least any books that documented their scandalous activities. So possibly Epiphanius read some of their theological or mythological treatises, and drew (or conjured up) his own conclusions. But did he read the Greater Questions of Mary and quote it accurately in his *Panarion*?

There is evidence that some such book did at one time exist: it is at least mentioned elsewhere, although there is no evidence that any other author of

a surviving work actually had seen it.[32] But nowhere else, outside of Epiphanius, are we given any indication of its contents. The episode that Epiphanius cites of Jesus engaging in illicit sex, coitus interruptus, and consumption of his own semen coincides perfectly well with Epiphanius' description of the activities of the Phibionites themselves. Moreover, Epiphanius almost certainly fabricated the accounts of these activities: he had never seen them, no one from within the group would have told him about them, they could not have been described in their other literature, and they stand at odds with what we do know of the ethical impulses of all other Gnostic groups from antiquity. On these grounds I would propose that Epiphanius made up the account of the Greater Questions of Mary. The Phibionites may have had a long-lived reputation for scurrilous activities—thus Gero—but if they were like every other Gnostic group for which we have firsthand knowledge—and why would they not be?—then their antimaterialist theology did not lead to socially scandalous and illegal promiscuity, but to ascetic dismissal of the passions of the flesh. The conclusion seems inevitable: Epiphanius got the matter precisely wrong and then fabricated his accounts, and at least one document, in order to make his point.[33]

OTHER CHRISTIAN FORGERS WHO ATTACK FORGERY

Epiphanius would not be the first Christian author to condemn forgeries and then produce a forgery (or at least a fabrication) himself; nor would he be the last. Indeed, one of our earliest Christian writings of record may represent an analogous, if less outrageous, situation. As is well known, Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians warns its readers against an earlier letter "as if by us" to the effect that "the Day of the Lord is almost here" (2:2). In other words, the author is concerned about a forgery that has the potential of leading his readers astray about the true nature of eschatology. The irony—one to which we should be slowly growing accustomed by now—is that 2 Thessalonians is itself widely thought not to be by Paul, even though it claims to be written by Paul and goes out of its way to convince its readers that it really is by Paul (thus 3:17).[34] Among other things, the passage in 2:2 makes it relatively certain that forgeries in the name of Paul were being produced already in the New Testament period. If 2 Thessalonians is authentic, then Paul knows of a troubling forgery in his

name already during his lifetime; if 2 Thessalonians is not authentic, then it is itself a forgery in Paul's name, in all probability not long after his death. Either way, there are Pauline forgeries in circulation. I will provide a fuller discussion of the matter later, but for now it is enough to state the widely held view that 2 Thessalonians is not Pauline. What this means, then, is that this is the first recorded instance in which a Christian forger—someone other than Paul claiming to be Paul—is warning his readers against a Christian forgery.

Here then is a ploy used at the beginning of the Christian era. And it was used for centuries to come, even after the invention of printing. In his lively and compelling book *Forgers and Critics*, Anthony Grafton points to no less a figure than Erasmus as another instance. Erasmus made a living off of exposing the forgeries, fabrications, and falsifications of his intellectual and religious tradition. Following in the path of the great Lorenzo Valla, for example, he showed compelling reasons for thinking that the famous correspondence between Paul and Seneca was forged: the letters are banal, Christ is hardly mentioned in them, Paul himself is portrayed as cowardly and timorous, and it is stupid to imagine that Seneca offered Paul a book "On the Abundance of Words" (De copia verborum) in order to help him write better Latin ("If Paul did not know Latin he could have written in Greek. Seneca did know Greek").[35]

But what goes around comes around. In 1530 Erasmus published an edition of the works of the third-century Cyprian, including a new treatise that Erasmus claimed to have found "in an ancient library," *De duplici martyrio* ("On the Two Forms of Martyrdom"). In this treatise the traditional martyrs are praised; but Cyprian also praises those who are martyrs in a different sense, who live a life of sacrifice (especially sexual) in the here and now. In Grafton's words, the treatise "takes a position highly sympathetic to Erasmus, who had always disliked the kind of Christianity that equated suffering with virtue, and had always preferred the human Christ hoping to avoid death in Gethsemane to the divine Christ ransoming man by dying at Calvary."[36] Grafton notes that the book is found in no manuscript that survives, it explicates passages of Scripture in ways paralleled in Erasmus's own commentaries, and the Latin writing style is very similar to Erasmus's own in such works as *The Praise of Folly*. Grafton's convincing conclusion:

> *De duplici martyrio* is not Erasmus' discovery but his composition; it marks an effort to find the support of the early Church for his theology at the cost—which he elsewhere insisted must never be paid—of falsifying the records of that Church. The greatest patristic scholar of the sixteenth century forged a major patristic work.[37]

From New Testament times to the early years of printing: forgers who condemn forgery. There are numerous examples between these two points. As Speyer has argued: "Frequently, however, the eras of incisive critique were also rich in forgeries. Hilduin of St. Denis, rather like Anastosius Sinaites, is critic and forger in one."[38] He later names as well the ninth-century archbishop of Rheims, Hincmar.[39]

Guilty parties leveling a charge are not found solely in the Christian tradition, of course, as we saw at the outset in the case of Heraclides Ponticus and Dionysius the Renegade. As a final example we might consider the charge leveled at the emperor Hadrian in the forged Historia Augusta, on the pen of (Pseudo-) Spartianus. Hadrian is faulted for instructing his freedmen to attach their own names to his autobiography, to provide it with something less than self-referential credentials: "So desirous of a wide-spread reputation was Hadrian that he even wrote his own biography; this he gave to his educated freedmen, with instructions to publish it under their own names. For indeed, Pflegon's writings, it is said, are Hadrian's in reality" (*Hadrian* 1.6).[40]

Yet again we have the exposure of a forged document (Pseudo-Hadrian) by a forger (Pseudo-Spartianus). The Historia Augusta is full of such irony, never found more elegantly than in the pseudonymously penned statement of *Aurelian* 1–2: "There is no writer, at least in the realm of history, who has not made some false statement." And this by an author who is writing, to use Ronald Syme's term, under a "bogus name."[41]

CONCLUSION: THE THEMES OF THE STUDY

These anecdotal accounts set the stage and express the themes for our detailed examination of the use of forgery in the context of early Christian polemics. Each incident has involved the use of forgery in a polemical context, where the forgery, based on an authority claimed under the guise of

an assumed name, provided ammunition for the assault on the views of another.[42] In each case, the forgery was meant to deceive its readers; that is to say, the authorial claims were meant to be believed. No one approved of someone else's forgery; the practice of forgery was condemned, in fact, even in works that were themselves forged. This is just one of the ironies that emerge from the ancient forged literature. One of its corollaries is that forgeries were sometimes used to counter the views of other forgeries. This is a phenomenon that I will be calling "counterforgery" in its narrow sense. We will see numerous instances of the phenomenon throughout the Christian tradition of the first four centuries.

Before looking specifically at the Christian materials, it will be important to have a more thorough grounding in the practice of forgery in the broader environment, defined here as the Greek and Roman worlds of antiquity and late antiquity. This will be the subject of Chapters Four and Five. First, however, I need to explain the terminology that I will be using throughout the study and justify my usage. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

1. For texts and fragments, see the standard edition of F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, Hefte VII, *Heracleides Pontikos* 2nd ed. (Basel: Schwabe 1969); and now Eckart Schütrumpf, *Heraclides of Pontus: Text and Translations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2009). For a full study, see H. B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). Contra Wehrli, who based his judgment on the comments of Diogenes Laertius, Heraclides is now seen as a member of the Platonic Academy, not a member of the school of Aristotle. So Gottschalk (pp. 2–6) and Schütrumpf (p. vii).

2. Texts and translation in R. D. Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 2 vols. LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1972).

3. All anecdotes are taken from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 5.6.

4. Richard Bentley, "Dissertation upon Phalaris," in *The Works of Richard Bentley*, ed. Alexander Dyce, vol. 1 (London: F. MacPherson, 1836; reprinted New York: Hildesheim, 1971), pp. 289–96.

5. See H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903); vol. 1, pp. 93–96.

6. Some editors have proposed amending ουδ' το ου δε, so that the acrostic ends with ἐπίσταται, followed by Diogenes' comments, "but he was not

ashamed." See Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius* ad loc.

7. Wehrli, *Schule*, pp. 62–63.

8. And one can think of other options. For example, it is possible that Dionysius knew that Heraclides was beginning a work on Sophocles; or, possibly—in a world of limited book distribution—he arranged for this work simply to fall into Heraclides' hands; and so on.

9. Galen, *In Hipp. Epid. II* comment II.

0. See pp. 390–96 and the useful introduction in the first volume of Marcel Metzger's important edition of the text in the Sources Chrétienne, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, SC 320 (Paris: Cerf, 2008).

1. *Architecture*, book 7, preface 3. Translation of Frank Granger, *Vitruvius on Architecture, Books VI–X*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1934). For other discussions of plagiarism in antiquity, see, for example, Polybius *Histories* 9.2.1–2 and Pliny, *Natural History*, Preface 20–23, and my discussion on pp. 52–55.

2. Unless otherwise noted, English translations are my own. For a full translation, see James Donaldson, "Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7; reprint edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004; American edition original, 1886). Hereafter *ANF*.

3. Bruno Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis: Die Gattung der altchristlichen Kirchenordnungen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), p. 133.

4. Thus M. Metzger, "Les CA par contre ont été diffuses sous le nom de Clément,… Les CA sont donc un écrit pseudépigraphique," *Les Constitutions Apostoliques*, vol. 1, pp. 33–34; similarly Bruno Steimer, "Clemens agiert als Sekretär der versammelten Apostel; … also hat ihm der CA-Kompilator eine Vermittelrolle zugewiesen" *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 130.

5. For discussions of διά in the context of letter writing and carrying, see the discussion on pp. 248–49 with reference to Silvanus' alleged role in the letter of 1 Peter.

6. This is a common view among the commentators on the Apostolic Constitutions, for example, Metzger, *Constitutions Apostoliques*, 1. 33–38; and Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 130–33. For an attempt to deny that the author intended to deceive his readers, see Joseph G. Mueller, *L'ancien testament dans l'ecclésiologie des Pères* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 77–84. Mueller's arguments fail to convince. He claims, for example, that since

the Apostolic Constitutions condemns the use of forgery to authenticate a perspective, it would not use precisely the means that it condemns. This overlooks the fact that forgers commonly practiced what they condemned, as we will see; in fact, they condemned what they practiced precisely in order to convince their readers that they were not doing what they condemned. Mueller also argues that the author could not have used documents known in the community (the Didascalia, the Didache, and the Apostolic Traditions, along with the fourth-century canons that appear in 8.47), while seriously maintaining that these derived from the apostles, when the readers would have recognized them for what they were. This objection assumes that we know precisely what we do not: who was in the author's community and what texts they were familiar with, let alone whether he circulated his work in his own close-knit community.

7. On the question of whether pseudepigraphic writings were considered a form of lying, see below pp. 128–32. For now, it is enough simply to note the derivation of pseudepigrapha—writings inscribed with a ψεῦδος—a "lie."

8. It is hard to imagine how someone could claim the author—the forger—was not trying to be taken seriously. Here is someone who insists that his own book be accepted as canonical.

9. I will justify the use of the term *forgery* for the canonical pseudepigrapha below, pp. 28–32. For now it is enough to note that the books falsely claiming to be written by Peter (for example) inside the New Testament are no different, in extending that false claim, from books that falsely claim to be written by Peter outside the New Testament.

0. See 3 Corinthians, where the same two are mentioned.

1. *L'ancien testament*, pp. 79–80.

2. "Indem der CA-Kompilator seine Fälschungkritik durch ein Echtheitskriterium ergänzt, vermeidet er es, sein eigenes Werk dem selbst formulierten Verdikt zu unterwerfen; das Echtheitskriterium liefert ihm ein probates Mittel, als Fälschung gegen Fälschung zu polemisieren." *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 353.

3. "The warning against pseudepigraphal writings, which appears twice in the Apostolic Constitutions, must be considered the strongest argument in favor of its authenticity." ("Als stärkstes Argument der Authentizität ist die in der CA doppelt vorkommende Warnung vor pseudepigraphischen Schriften zu werten.") *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 132–33.

4. Translation of Henry Percival from Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. 14. Reprint edition Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994; American edition original, 1900), p. 361. Hereafter *NPNF*.

5. Translation mine. For the Greek text, see Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 610.

6. For an older, but still useful, if basic, study, see Gerard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius*, Studies in Christianity and Judaism 1 (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1981). More generally, see Jon Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, NAPSPMS 13 (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1988).

7. "With Walter Bauer on the Tigris: Encratite Orthodoxy and Libertine Heresy in Syro-Mesopotamian Christianity," in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1986), pp. 287–307.

8. "The Libertine Gnostic Sect of the Phibionites according to Epiphanius," *VC* 21 (1967): 103–19.

9. For the link between charges of sexual deviance and heresy in ancient polemics, see the insightful analysis of Jennifer Knust, *Abandoned to Lust* (New York: Columbia University, 2005).

0. On Fronto, see Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 9.5; on Celsus, see Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 6.27; on Jewish apologia, see Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 2.8; on pagan attacks on pagans, see the burlesque in *The Phoenician Miscellanies*. In general, see Stephen Benko, "The Charges of Immorality and Cannibalism," in *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1984), ch. 3.

1. See the now classic study of Frederik Wisse, "The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists," *VC* 25 (1971): 205–23.

2. It appears, for example, as one of the thirty-five Gospel books in the Samaritan Chronicle II.

3. Technically speaking, the Greater Questions of Mary would not be a forgery in the sense that I will be defining it presently, but a fabrication—a made-up narrative.

4. For a fuller discussion, see pp. 156–71.

5. Cited in Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 43; quoting from P. S. Allen et al., eds., *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906–1958), 8:40.

6. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, p. 44.

7. Ibid., p. 45.

8. "Oft aber waren Zeiten scharfsinniger Kritik auch reich an Fälschungen. Hilduin von St. Denis ist ähnlich wie Anastasios Sinaites Kritiker und Fälscher in einer Person," Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 85.

9. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 200. See further H. Schrörs, *Hinkmar, Erzbischof von Reims* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1884), pp. 398–400; Schrörs tries to exonerate Hincmar of the charge of forgery in pp. 507–12. But see B. Krusch, "Reimser Remigius Fälschungen," in *Neues Archiv Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 20 (1895): 531–37.

0. Translation of David Magie in *The Historia Augusta*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1921–32).

1. Ronald Syme, *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), ch. 1.

2. This is true even of the Apostolic Constitutions, as we will see later in Chapter Twelve.

CHAPTER THREE

Terms and Taxonomies

Many scholars, especially Neutestamentlers, object to the use of the term *forgery* for the phenomenon I have so far described: a book written with a false authorial claim.[1] This is because of its negative connotations, sometimes asserted to be a modern and thus anachronistic imputation. I will deal with these objections in detail in Chapter Four. For now, it is enough to say that the terms used in antiquity were just as negative or even more so. What we call forgeries—books with false authorial claims—were typically called deceits, lies, and bastards.

THE TERMS OF FORGERY

Before discussing ancient terms, I need to clarify how I will be using modern ones. Those who object to the term *forgery* typically prefer to speak of pseudonymity or pseudepigraphy. Often these two terms are used synonymously, but that can lead to confusion, since other scholars, especially German and French, draw a clear distinction between them. Consider the differentiation of Eve-Marie Becker: "The terms pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity should not simply be used synonymously. In the case of pseudonymity, a fictitious author is chosen, in the case of pseudepigraphy, the work is ascribed to a real author."[2]

Rather than considering the two terms as categorically distinct, however, I prefer to see one as a subset of the other. For the purposes of this study, I will be using the term *pseudonymous* in a broad sense to refer to any writing that appears under a name other than that of the author. Roughly speaking, there are two kinds of pseudonymity. Some books, past and present, are written under a fictitious pen name. In modern times one naturally thinks of Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) or George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans). The question of the "innocence" of the fiction is often open, even with the use of pen names. Evans chose a male name, in part, to facilitate the publication of her work. It was not a purely innocent act, but a closely reasoned one intended to effect a desired result. Even so, it was not

"deceptive" in the way it would have been if she had written a novel claiming to be Jane Austen. In the ancient world there are examples of fictitious pseudonymity as well, as I will discuss later in this chapter: Xenophon wrote the *Anabasis* under the name of Themistogenes (a not altogether innocent choice, as we will see) and Iamblichus, in a different era, wrote his *Mysteries* as Abamon.

The other form of pseudonymity occurs when a book appears under the name of a well-known person who did not, in fact, write it. It is for this kind of pseudonymous writing that I will be using the more specific term *pseudepigraphy*. And so, all pseudepigrapha are pseudonymous, but not all pseudonymous writings are pseudepigraphic, as I am using the terms. Writings that appear under a false (known) name are again of two types. First, there are books that were originally published anonymously (or under a homonym) that were later ascribed by other writers, editors, scribes, or readers to well-known persons who did not actually write them. This kind of false ascription is not to be laid at the feet of the author, who produced the work without attaching any name to it (or simply his own name, which he happened to share with a well-known person). It is not an instance, then, of authorial deceit but of later misattribution.

The other kind of pseudepigraphon does involve an authorial claim. This is when an author indicates that he is a known (usually famous, at least locally) person, realizing full well that he is in fact someone else. As we will see in further detail, there are grounds for thinking that this kind of false authorial claim was typically meant to deceive the reader. Authors who wanted to commit such acts of deception had a variety of reasons. And they used a range of literary techniques to make the deception effective. All these matters we will consider at length in this chapter and the ones that follow. For now it is enough to establish the meaning of the term I will be using. This kind of pseudepigraphy is what I am calling "forgery," when an author claims to be someone else who is well known, at least to some readers. Forgeries involve false authorial claims.

The intention to deceive[3] is part and parcel of what it meant to produce a forgery; the claim to be a well-known person is not simply an innocent fiction. This distinction was critical to the greatest historian of ancient forgery, Wolfgang Speyer: "It is the intent to deceive that, beyond any particular literary purpose, makes a pseudepigraphon a forgery"[4] For Speyer, an authorial claim was deceptive and false when it functioned in

some nonliterary way, that is, as something other than a fiction, in order to accomplish some desired end. This purposeful intention to deceive the reader is what made a falsely named writing a forgery. And if it was a forgery, it was a form of literary lying: "Only where intent to deceive—that is to say, dolus malus—exists, does [a work] attain to the status of forgery. Forgery thus belongs in the same category as the lie."[5]

As I have already indicated, the term *forgery* is no more derogatory than the ancient terms used to describe the same phenomenon. In the texts that I will be dealing with, the most common terms include the following (and their cognates, in various accidental formations; all have their translational equivalents in Latin):

. *Ψεῦδος,* the common term for "lie." We have already seen the use of the term and some of its derivations—for example, ψευδεπίγραφα. As Armin Baum has argued in the most recent and useful analysis, in some contexts the term can, to be sure, mean an unintentional "falsehood." But Baum shows that this is not the normal meaning unless it is accompanied by some qualifying phrase, such as κατ' ἀγνοίαν.[6] Even beyond this, and more important still, the idea of an unintended falsehood (when one says something that is false, without knowing it or meaning to) is of no relevance to the term as it occurs in the contexts we are concerned with here. The authors who wrote 1 Timothy, 3 Corinthians, and the Letter to the Laodiceans, claiming to be Paul, knew full well that they were not really Paul. Ancient people would call these literary productions ψευδεπίγραφα: writings that are inscribed with a lie. They were not inadvertent falsehoods.

. *Νόθος.* This term refers to a child born out of wedlock, and carries with it all the negative connotations of our term *bastard*. A literary work is "illegitimate" if it does not actually belong to the person named as its author, just as a child is illegitimate if its real father is not known. For some authors, such as the much later Neoplatonist Olympiodorus, the term applies to books regardless of authorial intent: homonymous writings are, for him, *νόθα*.[7] My concern in this study is not with falsely ascribed (or purely homonymous) writings, but with writings with clear authorial claims. Ancients often referred to such a writing as a bastard (Latin: nothus or spurius).[8]

. *Κίβδηλος.* This term, "counterfeit," is entirely negative in connotation as well, referring often to the adulteration of coinage, and denoting that which is false, deceitful, and fraudulent. Often it is used in contrast with ἀληθής.

Speyer lists twenty-six Greek terms, with Latin equivalents, sometimes used to describe the act of committing forgery, almost all of them with negative connotations, including διαφθείρειν, μεταχαράττειν, and ῥᾳδιουργεῖν; to his list could be added πλάσσειν and ἀναπλάσσειν, "to make up," "invent," "fabricate." Simply on the terminological level, this was not a respectable practice. When one considers what ancient authors actually said about the practice—a matter to which we will soon turn—there appears to be no reason to shy away from calling it what it is. *Forgery* is not an unnecessarily negative term, contrary to the claims of some New Testament scholars.[9] Books that made false authorial claims were thought of as lies, bastards, and counterfeits.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PHENOMENA

Normal and Special Cases: "Typical" Instances of Forgery

Practices of forgery are complex and not easily classified. In "normal" forgeries, if we may use the term, an author falsely claims to be a well-known person. But that claim can be made in a variety of ways and with different levels of insistence. Just considering examples from our earliest Christian writings, in a number of cases the author states his assumed name and does nothing further in his writing to assure his reader that he really is who he claims to be. That appears to be the case, for example, in such books as 1 Peter and James.

In other instances, the author uses validation techniques to assure his readers that he is the actual writer. We will see such techniques more fully in Chapter Five. For now it is enough to note several of the most obvious kinds. In some instances, the author inserts corresponding verisimilitudes into his account to make the reader think he really must be who he says he is. An outstanding set of examples occurs in 2 Timothy, where the author reminds his (fictitious) reader of their past interactions ("you have observed my teaching, my way of life, … my patience … my persecutions, my

sufferings …" 3:10–11), but also gives to him personalized instructions: "Hurry and come to me quickly … and when you come bring the cloak that I left behind in Troas with Carpus, and also the books and especially the parchments" (4:9, 13). Such verisimilitudes assure the reader that this really is Paul writing to his young companion Timothy.

In other instances the author intensifies the claims through asseverations intended to demonstrate beyond doubt that he is who he claims to be. This happens, for example, in 2 Peter, whose author insists with some vehemence that he was actually there to see the majesty of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16–18). He was among the "eyewitnesses" to the event and among those who "heard the voice that came from heaven." The argument that he makes depends on his telling the truth about the matter. So too the author of 1 Timothy, who swears an oath "I speak the truth, I am not lying," when he claims to be Paul, "preacher, apostle of the truth, and teacher of Gentiles" (2:7).

Sometimes the asseverations take the form of written guarantees of the author's identity, as happens, for example, in the famous conclusion of 2 Thessalonians: "This greeting is in my own hand, the hand of Paul, which is the sign in all my letters; this is how I write" (3:17).

There are other kinds of forgery that might be considered special cases, somewhat more complicated than the simple instance of an author claiming at the outset to be someone else. Here I will mention three such instances:

. *Embedded forgeries*. Some writings do not make the explicit claim to be authored by a well-known person, but instead embed first-person narratives —or other self-identifying devices—in the course of their discussions, without differentiating the first person from the author. In these instances the reader naturally assumes that the person speaking in the first person is actually the writer of the account. A good example occurs in the Ascension of Isaiah, whose author does not self-identify at the outset but instead sets out an anonymous historical framework, written to sound very much like the prose narrative sections of the book of Isaiah itself. Partway through the narrative, however, and at key points throughout, the revelation given through Isaiah begins to be delivered in the first person. The (real) author of the account does not indicate that he is now quoting someone else, making the reader assume that the author has now begun speaking about what he himself experienced. This provides an unimpeachable authority for the

account: it is revealed by none other than Isaiah. This kind of embedding strategy shows how blurry the lines of distinction can be between forgery and other kinds of writing. In many ways an embedded forgery is comparable to the use of speeches invented by historians and placed on the lips of their protagonists; but in those cases it is clear that the author has moved from narrative description to an (alleged) speech, even though the speech is invented. In an embedded forgery the narrator simply slips into another guise and becomes the authenticating figure. In another sense this kind of forgery is not so very different from fabrications of sayings reported to be from an authoritative figure, but that are actually the inventions of the author or of the unknown tradents who have passed them along in the oral tradition—such as many of the sayings of the Gospel of Thomas or later (or earlier) Gospel materials. But there again the sayings are attributed to another person and are presented by a narrator who is distinct from the one who is speaking, unlike what happens in the embedded forgery. For the latter, the narrator becomes the speaker (or participant in the action of the narrative). The Ascension of Isaiah, then, is a kind of forgery. The speaker who describes his experiences to the scribe recording the account is allegedly none other than Isaiah of Jerusalem himself.[10]

. *Redactional forgeries*. There are a number of instances in which a book was originally circulated as an anonymous work, and was known in that form for some time, before a later editor or scribe altered the text to make it present an authorial claim. The book is not then a forgery from its inception, but it becomes a forgery in the course of its transmission, not in the sense that the (original) author made a false authorial claim but in the sense that a later redactor reworded the text in such a way as to have the author (unwittingly) make such a claim. This is the case, for example, with the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. In the oldest parts of the textual tradition, this account of Jesus the mischievous wunderkind is simply narrated apart from any authorial claim. Only in later manuscripts is the name Thomas attached to it. Presumably this Thomas is to be taken as Jesus' twin brother Judas (Didymus), a particularly qualified authority to recount the miraculous childhood of the Son of God. But as Gero has argued, the attribution is late, probably from the Middle Ages.[11] The author himself made no authenticating claims.

. *Non-pseudepigraphic forgeries*. There are other instances in which a book puts forth clear, but false, authorial claims without actually naming an author. This is true of one of the forgeries of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Ecclesiastes, which is allegedly authored by the "son of David," who is ruling as the king in Jerusalem, a man both inestimably rich and wise. Obviously the author means his readers to take him to be Solomon; but he never calls himself by name. This then creates an ironic situation: the author claims to be a famous person without actually naming himself. And so the book is a forgery (Solomon did not actually write it), but it is not, technically speaking, pseudepigraphic since it is not inscribed with the false name. A similar situation obtains much later in Christian circles in a book such as the "Martyrdom of Marian and James," whose author claims, falsely, to have been a personal companion of these two estimable martyrs, but never identifies himself by name.[12]

Some Not-So-Special Cases: When Forgery Is Allegedly Not Forgery

In Chapter Four we will see a number of scholars who, on general principle, are loath to label pseudepigraphic writings (especially canonical cases) forgeries, in part because they fail to see that false authorial claims involve deception. There are other scholars who posit special cases in which forgery is not really forgery. For these scholars, there are indeed instances of deception among the pseudonymous writings of antiquity, but other instances entailed special circumstances that make it inappropriate to label the pseudepigraphic writings in question forgeries.

Wolfgang Speyer and "Genuine Religious Pseudepigraphy"

One commonly cited flaw in Speyer's rightly celebrated survey of pagan and Christian "Fälschungen" is his special category of "echte religiöse Pseudepigraphie" ("genuine religious pseudepigraphy"). Speyer notes that the category of forgery presupposes the concept of literary property: an author in some sense "owns" his work. Speyer traces this concept back to certain modes of Greek rational thought. When this kind of rationality is not in evidence in an ancient author, who instead writes under the inspiration of a divine being, Speyer maintains, the claim to authorship no longer consists of a deceit. In this case, it is the deity who is allegedly writing the book and

the human inscriber is simply a tool in the hand of the divine. This kind of writing cannot be understood "scientifically," since it presupposes a different kind of thought and experience from that of the modern scholar:

> The final form of literary activity listed here, for which a deity is considered to be the originator of the written memorial, can be designated mythical or "religious pseudepigraphy." It is "genuine," as long as the belief in a divine revealer is vividly experienced as such … "genuine" religious pseudepigraphy could appear only in places not yet penetrated by rationalism, that is to say, primarily in regions at the margins of the Greco-Roman world.[13]

As examples Speyer has in mind certain kinds of oracular writing, or from Jewish circles, apocalypses truly based on revelatory experience. He thinks there are virtually no instances in the Christian literature.

This category is not unique to Speyer. In many ways it is similar to the view of J. Sint that "echte religiöser Ergriffenheit" (emotion) could lead to pseudepigraphic activity:

> It has become apparent, that a great number of writings can be explained only on the basis of religious motivations or motivations related to the psychology of religion. From the peculiarity of mythical thinking and genuine religious emotion the author obtains such persuasive power for his undertaking that we can no longer speak of conscious deception, that indeed ethical truth questions do not pose any problems for him and that he therefore could not fear being unmasked."[14]

For Speyer, there are also instances in which the religious pseudepigraphy is "false" rather than "genuine." This is when a later author, cognizant of Greek rationalistic modes of thought and conversant with ideas of authorship, pretended to be under the inspiration of a divine being, and somewhat cynically then produced an imitation of a genuinely religious pseudepigraphon.

This further differentiation, however, reveals a principal problem with the category. It represents an attempt to render a historical judgment (what

kind of pseudepigraphon is this work?) on the basis of a nonhistorical criterion (what is the state of mind of the author? Does he genuinely feel inspired by the divine?).[15] Inner psychological states are never accessible to the historian, and so surely they are not the best basis for forming historical conclusions. Hence the critique of E. J. Bickerman in his extended review of Speyer's work: "The hypothesis concerning 'genuine' religious pseudepigraphy is thus not only spurious, it is useless."[16]

Other objections are raised by H. Balz, who points out that the instances we have of Speyer's genuine religious pseudepigrapha are based on oral traditions that were later written down by an author. They are not, in other words, the product of immediate religious experience of divinely inspired prophets but are literary productions generated for the needs of communities.[17] More recently, and from another angle, P. Beatrice objects that Hesiod received his "information" about the genealogy of the gods from the Muses, yet signed the *Theogony* in his own name, just as the prophets of Israel who were conscious of being under the inspiration of God, and who spoke in his name, nonetheless produced orthonymous works.[18] When they did so, they were certainly not driven by the spirit of Greek rationalism. The other problem is that one might imagine how an author in a divinely inspired ecstatic trance might write in the name of the God who is using him as his vessel; but why would he be driven, then, to claim to be another human? Why produce the writing in the name of someone else, rather than in the name of God?

In any event, since Speyer finds little evidence of any kind of genuine religious pseudepigraphy among Christian authors, his claims on this score are of little direct relevance for the current investigation.

Kurt Aland and the Authorial Spirit of God

By way of contrast, a much cited article by Kurt Aland declares that inspiration by the Spirit of God was precisely a Christian phenomenon and that it can explain the pseudepigraphic practices of the early church. The early Christian authors understood that the Holy Spirit was speaking through them when they wrote, much as he had spoken through them and their co-religionists when they orally delivered the Word of God to their hearers. When writing what the Spirit revealed, it would have been deceitful

and false to claim their own names, as if the words were their own. As Aland puts it, "not only was the tool by which the message was given irrelevant, but … it would have amounted to a falsification even to name this tool, because … it was not the author of the writing who really spoke, but only the authentic witness, the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the apostles."[19] As a result:

> When pseudonymous writings of the New Testament claimed the authorship of the most prominent apostles only, this was not a skillful trick of the so-called fakers, in order to guarantee the highest possible reputation and the widest possible circulation for their work, but the logical conclusion of the presupposition that the Spirit himself was the author.[20]

According to Aland, it was only later in the life of the Christian community, once the age of prophecy had ceased, that works falsely written in the names of the apostles could be thought of as actual forgeries. This started happening in the midsecond century. By then "the possibility for the genesis of 'authentically pseudonymous' writings had passed."[21] Like Speyer, then, Aland maintains that there were authentic and inauthentic pseudepigrapha. Only the latter are to be deemed forgeries.

Despite the temporary popularity of Aland's view, there is little to commend it. For one thing, the claim that the earliest Christian authors would not write under their own names because they considered themselves inspired by the Spirit appears simply not to be true. Our earliest author is Paul, who names himself in no uncertain terms, and who certainly felt driven by the Spirit—at least as much as, say, the forgers who produced books in his name in later periods (Ephesians, 1 Timothy, and so on). Moreover, as was the case with Speyer, Aland's view might well explain why an author refused to name himself—it was the Spirit talking, not him personally—but it cannot explain why an author *did* name himself, as some other (well-known) person. If it was the Spirit talking, why claim specifically to be Peter? Or James? Or Jude? Why not simply say "Thus says the Lord," or "Thus says the Spirit of God"? Or write anonymously altogether?

Moreover, it is worth noting that no ancient pseudepigrapher justifies his work on these grounds, and no ancient critic supplies this explanation for why works were forged. In the end, this is an attempt to justify a practice widely recognized in the ancient environment as deceitful. It is, in other words, theology, not history. And in the view of H. Balz it is not even good theology, as it means that these later "authentic pseudepigraphers" were more inspired by the Spirit than the Apostle Paul was.[22]

David Meade and the "Reactualization of the Tradition"

More influential in recent decades, at least in English-speaking circles, is the notion set forth in a revised Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Nottingham by David Meade, who argues that a good deal of the early Christian pseudepigrapha—at least those found in the canon—can be explained not as forgeries meant to deceive but as claims to stand within authoritative streams of tradition. Meade argues that the authors of the New Testament were appropriating modes of authorship with a venerable standing in the Jewish tradition (he pays no heed to the literary practices of the rest of the world). In Jewish writings, Meade avers, it was common to assume the name and the mantle of a fountainhead of a tradition, not in order to lie about one's own identity but in order (truthfully) to indicate one's traditional allegiances. This happened already in biblical sources.

So, for example, the book of Isaiah is not entirely the work of the eighth-century prophet of Jerusalem. The writings of two later authors, living in different contexts and addressing different situations, were added to those of their famous predecessor. This was not to deceive the reader but to inform her that the views and perspectives represented in this new account stood in the authoritative line of tradition begun by Isaiah himself. So too wisdom sayings produced centuries after the death of Solomon were attributed to the great king in order to apply his traditional wisdom to new situations. Similarly, later apocalyptic traditions were named after such figures as Enoch and Daniel.

In none of these instances was an author trying to deceive his readers. He was instead reactualizing the old tradition for a new context, showing how the old tradition was relevant and important for a new setting. This form of *Vergegenwärtigung*, then, does not represent the illicit borrowing of the name of another; it involves making a legitimate claim to stand in the

other's line of tradition. And so, for example, with respect to the composite book of Isaiah, Meade can conclude:

> The anonymous/pseudonymous expansion of the Isaianic corpus is a recognition that Isaiah had become *part* of the tradition, and *the resultant literary attribution of that corpus must be regarded more as a claim to authoritative tradition by the participants in the process, and less a claim to actual authorship by Isaiah of Jerusalem*.[23] So too, the attribution of Ecclesiastes to Solomon, or of apocalyptic texts to Daniel and Enoch, "*is primarily an assertion of authoritative tradition, not a statement of literary origins*.[24]

And so, for Meade, the authors of New Testament pseudepigrapha, such as the Pastoral epistles, were not being deceptive when they claimed to be apostles. The author of 1 Timothy was informing his reader that he stood within the tradition established by the authentically Pauline epistles. He was genuinely attempting to apply Pauline views to the new situation that he was addressing. His claim to be Paul amounted to an assertion that his exhortations and perspectives were those of Paul himself—or would be, were Paul alive to address the new situation at hand. Vergegenwärtigung then is not forgery; it is a completely legitimate claim to stand closely within the Pauline tradition.

On one hand, this position is innately attractive: it acknowledges the historical fact that a number of the writings of the New Testament are pseudepigraphic, yet it absolves the authors of the charge of forgery. The view is nonetheless seriously flawed, on a number of grounds.

For one thing, Meade isolates the writings of the New Testament canon from the rest of the early Christian literature. Here again, this is theology, not history. Are there really *historical* grounds for claiming that 1 Timothy is pseudepigraphic Vergegenwärtigung but 3 Corinthians is a forgery? Was the author of 3 Corinthians not trying to make Paul speak for a new day? Does he not also stand—or at least try to stand—in line with Paul's teachings, for example, on the importance of the resurrection and life in the body?

In addition, Meade isolates these writings by situating them firmly, and only, in Jewish literary practices of the Bible, as if the New Testament

authors were (1) Jews who (2) both knew and embraced the editorial practices that brought the various authors later named Isaiah altogether on the same scroll, or the various strands of the Danielic or Enochic traditions into a single work.

As to the first point, the vast majority of the early Christian authors, in particular the anonymous and pseudepigraphic writers after Paul (in other words, virtually all of them), were not Jews, did not originate in the Jewish tradition, and show no signs of being intimately familiar with distinctively Jewish authorial practices, if any such thing ever existed. They were gentiles, who learned to write in gentile circles. They certainly did not have Jewish habits of Vergegenwärtigung hardwired into them. Even beyond that, it is very hard indeed to establish that Jewish modes of pseudepigraphy were distinctive. As Christopher Rowland has aptly observed, with respect to the most common form of Jewish pseudepigraphic writing from the time of the New Testament, the apocalypses: "a distinctively Jewish interpretation of Pseudonymity is difficult to uphold."[25] If that is true of Jewish apocalypses, how much more so of Christian writings, which were not written by Jews and were not tied, in terms of genre, to anything specifically Jewish.

It is striking, however, that Meade maintains that the writers of the New Testament pseudepigrapha not only stood within a thousand-year Jewish tradition of reactualization but were conscious of doing so. If this was a literary tradition in ancient Israel, why is it never mentioned in any source from antiquity? The reality is that ancient Jews, at least in the time that Meade is interested in, were in no way conscious of this literary "tradition." That is to say, first-century Jews, lacking access to nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship in higher criticism, did not know that Isaiah was the work of three authors put together onto one scroll. For them, and their Christian counterparts, there was one Isaiah and he wrote the entire book. And Daniel wrote Daniel and Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes. How could these later writers have stood in a tradition they did not know existed?

Moreover, many of the key (Jewish) examples that Meade cites simply do not relate to the (Christian) phenomenon he is trying to explain. Whoever wrote 2 Isaiah says nothing about being Isaiah, and we have no idea who put his anonymous writings on a scroll with those of his predecessor from 150 years earlier. How does that relate, then, to the author of 2 Peter, who goes out of his way to inform his readers that he really is

Simon Peter and that he actually saw Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, so that he, as opposed to his enemies, knows whereof he speaks? Or to the author of 2 Timothy, who not only names himself as Paul but supplies extensive verisimilitudes to prove it? These are not commensurate cases.

On one point Meade is certainly correct. Whoever wrote 1 Timothy wanted his readers to think that he was standing within the Pauline tradition and that his views were those that Paul would have expressed had he been writing in the same situation. But of how many instances of pseudepigraphy can that *not* be said? One of the salient features of the ancient Christian literary tradition is precisely that authors taking contrary theological and practical positions appeal to the same authorities in support. Or rather, they claim to be the same authors, while advancing their own views, thinking that their views are, or would be, the views of the authors they are claiming to be. Whoever wrote the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter in order to denigrate the flesh and show its unimportance in the scheme of salvation appealed to Peter's authority in support of his view, and if pressed no doubt would have indicated that this really was Peter's view. But so too would the author of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter, who wrote to show that the fleshly existence ultimately matters and that salvation, and damnation, will be experienced precisely in the flesh. The first author would have considered the second a liar when he called himself Peter, and would have labeled his writing a forgery; the second would have responded in kind. Who is right? It may be possible for historians to adjudicate these claims, at least in theory. One of these writers may indeed be closer to the views of the historical man Peter. But given the fact that he has left us no writings, it is really very difficult to say. And even were we to give the palm to one writer or the other, the reality is that both of them fabricated narratives and then claimed to be Peter in order to deliver them. None of this material goes back to Peter. All of it is fabricated. Both works are forged.

In the end Meade's position that pseudonymous claims of the (canonical) writers is primarily about authoritative tradition rather than literary origins is based on a false and misleading dichotomy. In point of fact, the "authoritative" tradition that a forger lays claim to is made authoritative for the reader precisely because of the claim of literary origins. It is because the author is Peter, or Paul, or Thomas, or John, or Jesus, that the claims of his account are accepted as authoritative. In other words, in all these instances

an author has lied about his identity in order to establish the veracity of his account. But so did other authors—sometimes claiming the same names—in order to authorize their discrepant accounts. Completely opposite views are advanced in the same name. All of them are acts of Vergegenwärtigung. But to excuse some of them and not others requires either a set of theological (not historical) norms or a pair of canonical blinders.

Harry Gamble sums the matter up as follows: "Others [outside of Meade] … find nothing distinctive in Jewish pseudepigraphy and regard both Jewish and early Christian pseudonymity merely as particular manifestations of a wider ancient practice of which Greco Roman literature offers many examples." Specifically with respect to Pauline materials, Gamble maintains: "Pseudonymous authorship is nothing else than it appears to be, namely the use of a revered apostolic name in order to assert the authority of teaching that was believed to be of value by its author, irrespective of its actual origins."[26]

Conclusion

Later we will discuss two other approaches to pseudepigrapha often taken by New Testament scholars in order to minimize the charges of deception: (1) the claim that nondeceptive pseudepigraphy was both widely practiced and sanctioned in the philosophical schools of antiquity, and (2) the assertion that the epistolary pseudepigrapha from early Christianity—at least the canonical cases—can be explained by appealing to the use of a secretary. Both claims, I will argue, are not supported by convincing evidence. These matters, however, need to wait until later chapters. At this stage it is more important to draw some preliminary conclusions. Forgery, based simply on the ancient terminology used to describe it, appears to have been a deceptive practice that was not widely sanctioned (more grounds will be given in Chapter Four). It cannot be explained away on the basis of alleged inspiration by the divine spirit(s); and it was not an innocent matter of reactualizing tradition. Forgery involved the conscious act of making a false authorial claim. Ancient writers considered it a form of lying. Before extending further evidence for this view, in the next chapter, we first need to continue our taxonomic efforts.

RELATED PHENOMENA

There are a number of literary phenomena that are closely related to forgery, and we do well to differentiate among them as clearly as possible.

Literary Fictions

It is widely recognized by scholars today, as it evidently was in antiquity, that some falsely named writings were not meant as deceptions but as literary fictions. This is particularly the case in certain letter collections and epistolary novels, written in the names of well-known figures but probably as rhetorical exercises rather than attempts to deceive a reading public. In many instances it is difficult to tell whether deception was part of the intent; in other instances the matter is clear. In either event this kind of pseudonymous writing has meager relevance for the present study, as there are no certain instances of pseudepigraphic fiction among the early Christian writings.[27]

The only full collection of epistolary fictions is in R. Hercher's 1873 volume *Epistolographi Graeci*, representing sixty letter writers and some sixteen hundred letters. Recent years have seen a burgeoning of interest in the matter, with a helpful bilingual collection of important specimens by C. D. N. Costa and several important studies, one of them book-length by P. Rosenmeyer.[28]

Costa usefully divides the fictional letters into two types. The first are "imaginary" (sometimes called "comic") letters. These are written under fictitious pen names, such as Aelian, Alciphron, and Philostratus, and appear to be produced by professional rhetoricians, or rhetoricians in training, on topics and themes to which they might devote declamations. They "aim to portray character and various levels of society, or to evoke a past age."[29] The other type comprises letters that are attributed to famous historical figures such as Phalaris or Themistocles, and especially to philosophers such as Anacharsis, Hippocrates, Diogenes, and Socrates. An earlier example would be Ovid's famous *Heroides*, which was clearly meant to be a fiction built on historically fictional characters. In this latter type, the figure in question is made to speak "in character," that is, these are written exercises in ethopoeia. Most of the philosophical letters have a

didactic, moralizing aim, but they are also meant to reflect something of the character and personality of the supposed author.[30]

The thorough and enlightening discussion of Rosenmeyer shows, perhaps unwittingly, just how difficult it can be at times to differentiate between literary fictions and deceptions. She notes that R. Syme in particular has argued that these letters should not be termed forgeries, but are better understood as "impostures" (a term that does not seem hugely different in connotation), which "were doubtless created without any serious intent to deceive."[31] Rosenmeyer's principal concern is that these writings not be simply written off as of no importance—as they have been since Bentley's exposure of the letters of Phalaris—and so discarded as the chaff of history. They are important in their own right, when situated in their appropriate historical, cultural, and especially rhetorical contexts.

This is fair enough, but there are some questionable cases. Rosenmeyer herself points out that verisimilitudes were part of the exercise, as these letters speak about the mechanics of writing, sending, sealing, receiving, and so on, for one major reason: "The more realistic the epistolary moment appears, both in terms of the occasion and the specific letter, the more convincing it will be to its readers, who seek the literary thrill of reading someone else's private messages."[32] This sounds like a concession to the idea that the writers wanted to convince their readers, and it is difficult to draw a very clear line between that attempt and pure literary deception.

One might consider, for example, the two sets of Socratic epistles, one connected with Antisthenes, which urges a rigorous lifestyle, and the other with Aristippus, which supports hedonism. Both advocate their own perspective and inveigh against the other. And why is that? It is because, in Rosenmeyer's own words, "a treatise on the subject would be rejected as just another (mis) interpretation of the philosopher; but a letter in the voice of the great man himself, or in that of his most highly regarded disciple, would be hard to refute."[33] That is exactly right; but it is also the reason that some of these fictions may be seen as going a step further in wanting their readers really to believe them to be actual letters written by the philosopher himself. It is at least possible, that is, that some of these works were produced not simply as rhetorical exercises but in order to perpetrate a literary deceit. However one judges that issue, fictions of this kind were difficult to keep in check. As Martina Janssen observes, there was no way

to control their reception history, as later readers in another context may have taken an authorial fiction to be a bona fide authorial claim, so that an original rhetorical exercise came to function as a forgery, apart from any authorial intent.[34]

In any event, with only one or two possible exceptions—possibly the letters of Paul and Seneca?[35]—there are probably no literary fictions among the early Christian writings, produced simply as rhetorical exercises.

Pen Names

Pen names—or pseudonymity in the traditional, German, sense—were not common in antiquity, but were not unheard of either. This use of a pen name differs from a literary fiction of the first type described above in that the composition in question is not a rhetorical exercise in ethopoeia, but an actual writing with a purpose that extends beyond itself.

In some instances a pen name may have been relatively innocent, the opportunity to write a work anonymously under a name chosen at random. This appears to be the case with the work produced by the six purported authors of the Historia Augusta. Ronald Syme in particular has shown that the solitary author of this collection of imperial biographies was a learned but somewhat mischievous scholar from around 400 CE, who fabricated a good deal of information, much of it for his personal enjoyment.[36] He was remarkably successful in his endeavor to hide his identity: up to the end of the nineteenth century the work was held to be authentic and basically reliable. Though not everyone realized it at the time, the death knell was struck in 1899 by Herman Dessau in a paper showing that the entire composition was the work of a single author writing centuries after the alleged authors. Dessau's argument: some of the characters mentioned in the work are fictitious and show signs of having been invented near the end of the fourth century.

In his chapter on "The Bogus Names," Syme categorizes all the cited names and authorities of the Historia Augusta, in ten categories, including the most significant: "fictitious characters who by their names reflect families eminent in the Roman aristocracy in the second half of the fourth century." He concludes that the author of the work was extremely erudite, but that he included a "profusion of details about food and drink and sex"

which "were not meant to be taken seriously." Moreover, "he has his own silly or elaborate jokes." Syme's conclusion was that "this man is a kind of rogue scholar."[37]

In other cases we know full well the author of a book, but it is hard to discern a reason for the pen name. Thus Iamblichus wrote *On the Mysteries* as Abamon, but his reason is itself a mystery. T. Hopfner suggested that Iamblichus wanted to hide from his potentially Christian readers the fact that he and his fellow Neoplatonists were sometimes at odds with one another. The book, after all, is a response to Porphyry's attack on his former student for his attraction to the occult, in a letter ostensibly addressed to "Anebo," itself a name that has generated considerable discussion (is it too an invention?).[38] Hopfner's theory, however, seems rather unlikely, as Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell point out, given Iamblichus' virtually complete disregard for Christians otherwise.[39] It may simply be that he recognized Porphyry's attack leveled at an alias for himself, and he responded in kind, pretending that the fictitious Anebo was his (the fictitious Abamon's) student as a "poke in the eye" to Porphyry, his own teacher.[40]

There are other instances where a pen name may have been chosen simply to protect the identity of the real author, in cases in which safety or other personal concerns were an issue: Janssen instances Nestorius' use of the name Heraclides in his *Liber Heraclidis*.[41] At other times the use of a pen name was not innocent at all. That is Plutarch's suspicion of Xenophon, when he wrote his *Anabasis* in the name of Themistogenes, an alleged general of Syracuse. This pseudonym is often taken to be a simple pen name, chosen for no particular reason. But as Plutarch points out (*Moralia* 345e), by discussing his own military activities in the third person, as a purported outsider, Xenophon was able to give himself greater credence and glory than if he had written the account in his own name.

In yet other instances modern scholars have erred in thinking that a work was produced under a pen name. Aristophanes is sometimes said to have written his early plays pseudonymously, but D. McDowell has argued that in fact, given the mechanics of theatrical production, Aristophanes published them under the names of the persons who directed them, as those who were ultimately responsible for their contents.[42]

Homonymity

Ancient critics recognized full well the problems posed by homonymity, in a world where many names were common and few means were available to distinguish between authors of the same name. No one took the problem more seriously than the first-century BCE Demetrius of Magnesia, who wrote his book περὶ ὁμωνύμων ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων not only to differentiate among homonymous writers, but also to tell anecdotes about them.[43] Diogenes Laertius, our principle source for the book, more commonly refers to it with the shortened title οἱ ὁμωνύμοι (e.g., 1.38.79; 7.31.169). It is cited by other authors as well, however, including Athenaeus (*Banqueters* 13.611B). An entire chapter is preserved by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Diogenes himself often deals with the problems of authorship posed by homonymity, reporting, for example, as just one instance, that the critics Panaetius and Sosicrates maintained that of all the writings commonly attributed to Ariston of Chios, the Stoic philosopher, only the letters were authentically his. Another thirteen titles, some in multiple volumes, went under his name, but were in fact written by Ariston the Peripatetic (*Lives* 7.163). With respect to the figure with whom we started, Heraclides of Pontus, Diogenes informs us that there were thirteen other literary figures who shared the name, one of them, confusingly enough, also known as Ponticus.

As one might expect, there are times when ancient critics have difficulty resolving issues of homonymity. And so, Quintilian wavers on the rhetorical writings assigned to Hermagoras:

> There are however books ascribed to Hermagoras which support the view under discussion; but either the attribution is wrong or the author was some other Hermagoras. For how can they possibly be by the Hermagoras who wrote so much so admirably about Rhetoric, since (as is clear also from the first book of Cicero's *Rhetoric*) he divided the subject matter of Rhetoric into Theses and Causes? (*Institutio Oratio* 3.5.14)[44]

At other times there was less confusion, as in a case reported by Suetonius:

> For while some tell us that this same Ennius published a book "On Letters and Syllables" and another "On Metres," Lucius Cotta is right in maintaining that these were not the work of the poet but of a later Ennius, who is also the author of the volumes "On the Science of Augury." (*On Grammarians* 1.3)[45]

Numerous cases of homonymity have been uncovered only in modern times.[46]

What matters particularly for my purposes here, however, is the fact that some ancient critics posited homonymity as a chief reason that writings were transmitted under a false or wrong name, and were therefore to be termed νόθα.. This is explicitly stated by the fifth-century Neoplatonist Olympiodorus, when he wants to explore
διὰ πόσους τρόπους ἐνοθεύοντο τὰ βιβλία; the claim is repeated some years later by his student Elias.[47]

As is well known, the problems posed by homonymity were recognized by critics in the early Christian tradition as well. The best-known instance involved the third-century Dionysius of Alexandria, who argued that the book of Revelation was not written by the disciple John the son of Zebedee, but by some other John:

> That he was called John, and that this work is John's, I shall therefore not deny, for I agree that it is from the pen of a holy and inspired writer. But I am not prepared to admit that he was the apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, who wrote the gospel entitled According to John and the general epistles. On the character of each, on the linguistic style, and on the general tone, as it is called, of Revelation, I base my opinion that the author was not the same. (Quoted in Eusebius, *H.E.* 7.25)[48]

Among other books in question were 2 and 3 John, which Jerome suggested may have been written by John the Presbyter rather than John the son of Zebedee (*Vir. ill.* 9); and the Shepherd, attributed to Hermas, but to which Hermas? Origen (*Romans Commentary* 10.31) and possibly Eusebius (*H.E.*

3.3) maintained that it was the Hermas mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:14, putting the composition of the book back into apostolic times by a companion of the apostles, whereas the Muratorian Fragment insists that Hermas was the brother of the second-century bishop of Rome, Pius, and that it had been written "recently, in our own times." This was the view, of course, that eventually won out. Analogously, but somewhat later, the Adamantius who wrote De recta in deum fide was sometimes understood, wrongly, to be Origen; Rufinus reworked the dialogue by altering the places that showed it was written after Origen's day in order to use it to vindicate Origen's orthodoxy.[49]

Anonymity

There are far fewer anonymous writings from antiquity, and from Christian antiquity, than of other kinds of writing (orthonymous, falsely ascribed, forged). The reason is quite simple: anonymous works were almost always ascribed, usually incorrectly. This is due to what Wilamowitz famously described as a *horror vacui*. Speyer goes further in speculating that when libraries were collecting works, authors were assigned to them, with the most famous representatives of each genre then being ascribed works actually written by (anonymous) others: divine hymns were attributed to Homer, fables to Aesop, medical treatises to Hippocrates, and so on.[50]

Ancient critics sometimes discussed anonymity and its reasons, as when Clement of Alexandria claimed that the apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews anonymously because he realized that he was not much appreciated by the Jewish people to whom it was addressed: "In writing to Hebrews already prejudiced against him and suspicious of him, he was far too sensible to put them off at the start by naming himself" (Eusebius *H.E.* 6.14).

It is a genuine question as to why so many of the earliest Christian writings were produced anonymously (before being attributed). Michael Wolter argues that all these anonymata are principally concerned with differentiating their views, and the Christians who held them, from Jews and their religion. The use of anonymity, in his view, allowed the authors to claim implicitly that Jesus Christ himself was the authority behind their positions. Unfortunately, Wolter does not look at all the evidence, even

within the New Testament, his area of principal concern. He leaves 2 and 3 John out of consideration, for some reason, and these are certainly not chiefly concerned with the relationship of the Christian gospel to Judaism. Moreover, for other anonymous books of the New Testament, Judaism is only one of a number of concerns at best (it is a matter of concern for Mark, but is it the *principal* reason the Gospel was written?), and for others it is not a concern at all (1 John). It might be added that if one is seeking a historical explanation for the phenomenon, it will not do to restrict oneself to canonical writings: one also needs to deal with such works as the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, 2 Clement, and so on.

There may in fact have been a variety of reasons for Christian authors to remain anonymous. Wolter may be right that the choice was sometimes based on a desire to stress the authority of Christ himself, although that is not obvious from reading the texts. Possibly in some cases (2 and 3 John; the Didache) an author did not identify himself simply because he was already well known to the closely knit community to which he wrote. Or possibly, in the case of the Gospels, there was a generic consideration: like the histories of the people of God in the Jewish Scriptures (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings), the stories of God's work among his people, Israel, are told anonymously. The Gospels, in this view, portray Jesus as a continuation of God's historical activities.

In any event, all of New Testament anonymata and almost all other anonymous writings of the early Christian centuries came to be attributed eventually (see below). An exception such as the Letter to Diognetus can be explained on the ground that it was so little known. This early apology, for example, is never quoted in any ancient source. Books that circulated for a long time anonymously almost always were attributed. This is true, for example, of the anonymous source that Eusebius quotes to malign the Roman adoptionists in his *Ecclesiastical History* 5.28. Theodoret later named the book the Little Labyrinth and attributed it, wrongly, to Origen. Modern scholars have proved no more successful, sometimes, since Lightfoot, wrongly assigning it to Hippolytus.[51] With an anonymous book like the Didache, it may be that the attribution of the teaching to the disciples was mistakenly taken to be a claim about authorship.

False Attributions

As we will see more fully in the next chapter, ancient Greek and Roman critics were deeply concerned over the attributions of writings. As far back as the fifth century BCE, Herodotus expressed his doubts concerning the attribution of the Cyprian poems and the Cyclic poem "The Heroes' Sons" to Homer, based on their material discrepancies with the Homeric epics themselves (2.117; 4.32). Centuries later, a fellow Halicarnassan, Dionysius, indicated that works attributed to Cadmus of Miletus, Aristaeus of Proconnesus, and other historians like them were not "universally accepted as genuine" (οὐτε . . . πιστεύονται; *On Thucydides*. 23). Quite often attributions were simply rejected off the cuff, showing that criticism was commonplace. Thus, for example, in talking about lewd songs to be publicly performed, Athenaeus quotes a passage from the work called the "Beggars," and admits that the common attribution of the work is probably wrong: "Whoever wrote *Beggars*, generally attributed to Chionides, mentions a certain Gnesippus, playful writer of the lascivious muse …" (*Banqueters* 14:638d).[52]

As suggested earlier, attributions were sometimes simply made as a best guess or by simple mistake. This is probably the case for the attribution of the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* to Philo and the *Adversus omnes haereses* to Tertullian. The anonymous treatises *Cohortatio ad Graecos, De monarchia*, and *Oratio ad Graecos* sounded to some readers, as early as Eusebius (for at least the first two; he does not mention the *Oratio*) very much like Justin, and so they were attributed to him and were passed down in the manuscript tradition as his—wrongly, as is now known.[53] The same is true of later works that recorded the dialogues of Jerome and Augustine; they are sometimes attributed to these writers themselves, apparently on the ground that they were the principal speakers, even though they patently were not the authors.[54] Hundreds of sermons came to be attributed to Chrysostom, most of them wrongly.

In other instances attributions were not at all innocent. Whoever first thought of assigning the five books of the Torah to Moses did not do so out of purely antiquarian interests. On the Christian side, much the same can be said of the four books of the Gospels. Contrary to the extravagant claims of Martin Hengel, there is no reason to doubt that these books circulated for decades anonymously, before being attributed.[55] It is no accident that when these four books in particular—the ones in widest usage in the proto-

orthodox communities—were assigned, it was to two of the disciples and two companions of the apostles. The attributions to Mark and Luke should cause no surprise. As early as Irenaeus and Tertullian we can see how the proto-orthodox logic worked: Mark gave Peter's version of the story (cf. Papias) and Luke gave Paul's. As Tertullian puts it: "that which Mark produced is stated to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. Luke's narrative also they usually attribute to Paul. It is permissible for the works which disciples published to be regarded as belonging to their masters" (*Adv. Marc*. 4.5.3–4).[56] This is not to be misinterpreted—as it often is—to mean that Tertullian thought disciples could publish writings in the names of their teachers; Mark and Luke, in his opinion, published their works in their own names. But their views represent the views of their teachers. Thus the two greatest apostles of the church stand behind the Gospel traditions of these books.

And so the fourfold Gospel was based on the testimony of two personal disciples of Jesus and of his two principal apostles. Why were attributions made at all, after the books had originally circulated anonymously? The issues were complex, but can be boiled down to matters of differentiation (which Gospel is this?) and authority (is it based on a credible source?).

Other attributions as well may have been made for ulterior purposes. The anonymous letter that was early on assigned to Barnabas represents a view of Judaism and the Jewish Law that stands very much at odds with heterodox perspectives floated about by the likes of Marcion and various groups of Gnostics in the midsecond century. The book may be vitriolic in its opposition to Jews and Judaism, but it is not harsh toward the Old Testament. Quite the contrary, the Old Testament is presented as a distinctively Christian book, misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misappropriated by the Jews. It is, in fact, for the anonymous author, Christian Scripture. This became the proto-orthodox position in opposition to heterodox alternatives, which claimed that the Old Testament was not inspired by the one true, or ultimate, God. When Christians such as Clement of Alexandria falsely claimed that the anonymous letter was in fact written by Barnabas, they ascribed to it a significant authority. But not just any authority. Since Barnabas was otherwise so closely associated with Paul, the chief apostle of Marcion and much revered in some Gnostic circles, Paul himself was, by the indirection provided by the ascription, placed on

the side of the proto-orthodox in the struggle to define the Christian understanding of the Old Testament.

Plagiarism

It is sometimes stated that plagiarism was either nonexistent or nonproblematic in Greek and Roman antiquity. As a prominent publication of the Jesus Seminar tells us: "The concept of plagiarism was unknown in the ancient world."[57] In point of fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Plagiarism was known, discussed, and condemned in ancient sources. As one of the best studies of the phenomenon, by Bernard Legras, summarizes: "In spite of the reticence of our sources and assuming that our texts are indeed admissible, we have been able to establish that plagiarism and forgery of literary works were considered offenses and punished."[58] Legras does go on to qualify his statement: plagiarism and forgery were under legal sanction only in cases that appear to have affected the concerns of the state. There is no evidence of any proprietary laws, at any time or place, involving the concern to keep writings in general intact and safe from borrowing, or "stealing" as the ancients called it.

The phenomenon is in any event not unknown to our sources, as we have already seen in the case of Heraclides Ponticus, who, according to Diogenes Laertius, not only published extensively works of his own but also occasionally published works of others as if he had written them: "Chameleon complains that Heraclides's treatise on the works of Homer and Hesiod was plagiarized (κλέψαντα αὐτόν) from his own."[59] This was plagiarism by a man who, strikingly, wrote two separate treatises περὶ ἀρετῆς. Or consider his Athenian predecessor Aeschines, who stole dialogues of Socrates after the great man's death and was calumniated for it on more than one occasion, especially by Menedemus of Eretria, who claimed that "most of the dialogues which Aeschines passed off as his own were really dialogues of Socrates obtained by him from [Socrates's wife] Xanthippe. Moreover Aeschines made use (fraudulently: ἐσκευώρηται) of the *Little Cyrus*, the *Lesser Heracles*, and the *Alcibiades* of Antisthenes as well as dialogues by other authors" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 2.60).

At other times authors complained about writers who plagiarized their own work, none more memorably than Martial: "You mistake, you greedy

thief of my works, who think you can become a poet at no more than the cost of a transcript and a cheap papyrus roll. Applause is not acquired for six or ten sesterces" (*Epigrams* 1, 66).[60]

When plagiarism was detected in antiquity, it often had actual social repercussions. Thus Vitruvius recounts an incident involving Aristophanes of Byzantium, one of the judges of a literary contest staged by the King of Pergamum to celebrate the dedication of his famed library. Aristophanes, we are told, had "read every book in the library," and when the authors who presented their work were judged, he ruled that only one was worthy of the prize, to the consternation of the other judges and the king. But Aristophanes demonstrated that except for the one, all the "others recited borrowed work whereas the judges had to deal with originals, not with plagiaries [ceteros aliena recitavisse; oportere autem iudicantes non furta sed scripta probare]."[61] The king was more than a little dubious about the claim, and so Aristophanes proceeded to quote passages from books in the library to prove his point. The result, Vitruvius tells us, was that the plagiarizers were forced "to confess they were thieves [coegit ipsos furatos de se confitieri]. The king then ordered them to be brought to trial for theft. They were condemned and in disgrace, while Aristophanes was raised to high office and became librarian" (Book 7, Preface 7).

On occasion the condemnation for plagiarism led to even harsher reactions. Thus we learn of the expulsion of Empedocles from the school of Pythagoras, on the grounds of plagiarism: "Timaeus in the ninth book of his *Histories* says he [Empedocles] was a pupil of Pythagoras, adding that, having been convicted at that time of stealing his discourses (λέγων ὅτι καταγνωσθεὶς ἐπὶ λογοκλοπίᾳ τότε) he was, like Plato, excluded from taking part in the discussions of the school." (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 8.54).

Elsewhere Vitruvius himself delivers a stringent judgment on those who engaged in the practice of plagiarism: "While, then, these men [viz. Those who left a written record of past events and philosophies] deserve our gratitude, on the other hand we must censure those who plunder their works and appropriate them to themselves" (Book 7, Preface 3). This attitude coincides with other ancient discourse about the practice, as in Polybius' off-the-cuff comment on authors who discuss "genealogies, myths, the planting of colonies, the foundations of cities and their ties of kinship"; Polybius laments the fact that since so much has already been written about

such things, a modern writer who discusses them either rehashes what others have said or worse, "represents the work of others as being his own," a procedure that he calls "a most disgraceful proceeding" (ὃ πάντων ἐστὶν αἴσχιστον).[62]

Equally harsh is Pliny the Elder, who in his *Natural History* discusses his own practices of citation in contrast to those who are "of a perverted mind and a bad disposition" and steal the work of others to pass off as their own (*Natural History*, Preface 20–23):

> For I consider it to be courteous and to indicate an ingenuous modesty, to acknowledge the sources whence we have derived assistance, and not to act as most of those have done whom I have examined. For I must inform you, that in comparing various authors with each other, I have discovered, that some of the most grave and of the latest writers have transcribed, word for word, from former works, without making any acknowledgement; … For it is indeed the mark of a perverted mind and a bad disposition, to prefer being caught in a theft to returning what we have borrowed (obnoxii profecto animi et infelicis ingenii est deprehendi in furto malle quam mutuum redder).[63]

It is a genuine question concerning how relevant the ancient discourse on plagiarism is to the "unacknowledged borrowings" found throughout the early Christian literature. Assuming the two-source hypothesis, Matthew and Luke both acquired considerable amounts of their material, often verbatim, from Mark and Q, without acknowledgment. But if plagiarism is defined as taking over the work of another and claiming it as one's own, possibly the charge does not apply in these cases, as all the writings in question are anonymous. That is to say, the later Synoptic authors are not claiming anything as their own, as they do not even name themselves. The same would apply to the extensive and often verbatim reproduction of the Protevangelium Jacobi in such later texts as the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, in that the later author does not claim the earlier work as his own, since he is, in fact, writing pseudonymously.

A comparable situation obtains in the wholesale incorporation of the Didascalia Apostolorum, the Didache, and the Apostolic Traditions in the

fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions. But here the situation is somewhat more complex. Two of these earlier works are anonymous, making it difficult to give credit where credit was due. The Didascalia, on the other hand, was inherited as a forgery—it falsely claims to be written by the apostles—and is itself embedded in another work that is also a forgery, also allegedly written by the apostles. Why would a forger need to credit an earlier work that he allegedly (but in fact did not) write himself?[64] Or consider the case of 2 Peter and Jude. There is little doubt that the former borrowed a good deal of the latter in its polemic against nefarious but unidentifiable opponents. But the source of the argument is a forgery, as is the text that uses the source. Can a forger commit plagiarism? In one sense he obviously has borrowed the work of another without acknowledgment, or as the ancient sources would put it, he has "stolen" his work. But in another sense he has not claimed that work as his own, since he does not give his own name so as to take credit for what his stolen material says. In all these instances we are dealing with complex literary relations that do not neatly line up in taxonomies of fraudulence, either ancient or modern.

Fabrications

It is widely thought that the invention of speeches and faux documents in historical narratives, and the creation of historical narratives themselves, are analogous to literary forgery. In all such instances an author fabricates materials and passes them off as historical when in fact they are products of his own imagination, much as a forger writes a work claiming to be someone else, possibly imagining, or purporting, that what he says is what the other person would have said had he had the opportunity. Sometimes it is inferred that since the fabrication of, say, speeches in historical narratives was seen as an acceptable practice, the forging of writings in the names of others must have been seen as acceptable as well. In the next chapter we will see that this leap of logic is an entirely modern one, as ancients are consistently negative in their appraisal of literary forgery. For now, it is enough to note that even with respect to fabrication there was not a consistent and universal opinion among ancient writers.

For the general approbation of historians who invented the speeches of their protagonists, appeal is normally made to the comments of Thucydides

in his *History of the Peloponnesian War:*

> As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said.[65]

The practice of one historian, of course, does not necessarily reflect the practices of an era. But also to be considered is the sheer force of the ancient historians' dilemma: they needed, or at least wanted, to incorporate speeches in their accounts but usually had no means whatsoever of knowing what was actually spoken on the occasion. Moreover, there are other less frequently cited comments in our sources that reflect a similar attitude. And so, for example, Fronto mentions the practice of historians and annalists inventing letters thought to be appropriate to the occasion: "There are extant letters in both languages, partly written by actual leaders, partly composed by the writers of histories or annals, such as that most memorable letter in Thucydides of the general Nicias sent from Sicily."[66]

And as Cicero has his character Brutus state, when disagreeing with the first-person narrator's description of the death of Coriolanus: "At this he smiled and said: 'As you like, since the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative' (concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historias, ut aliquid dicere possint argutius)" (*Brutus*, 11.42).[67]

Other authors, however, were willing to concede this privilege *only* to rhetoricians, not to historians, whose task it was to record what actually happened in the past—speeches and all—rather than to invent words and deeds that simply seemed appropriate. No one expressed this alternative view more forcefully than Polybius, whose comments are directed against the historian Phylarchus, whose account of the Cleomenic War took very

much a Thucydidian approach to speeches, much to Polybius' chagrin and even outrage:

> This sort of thing he keeps up throughout his history, always trying to bring horrors vividly before our eyes. Leaving aside the ignoble and womanish character of such a treatment of his subject, let us consider how far it is proper or serviceable to history (τὸ δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας οἰκεῖον ἅμα καὶ χρήσιμον ἐξεταζέσθω). A historical author should not try to thrill his readers by such exaggerated pictures, nor should he, like a tragic poet, try to imagine the probable utterances of his characters or reckon up all the consequences probably incidental to the occurrences with which he deals, but simply record what really happened and what really was said (ῥηθέντων κατ' ἀλήθειαν αὐτῶν), however commonplace. For the object of tragedy is not the same as that of history but quite the opposite. The tragic poet should thrill and charm his audience for the moment by the verisimilitude of the words he puts into his characters' mouths, but it is the task of the historian to instruct and convince for all time serious students by the truth of the facts and the speeches he narrates, since in the one case it is the probable that takes precedence, even if it be untrue, in the other it is the truth, the purpose being to confer benefit on learners.[68]

Later in his *Histories* Polybius similarly maligns the historian Timaeus for using rhetorical flourishes in the speeches he provides his characters, rather than indicating what was "really" said:

> As the proverb tells us that a single drop from the largest vessel suffices to tell us the nature of the whole contents, so we should regard the subject now under discussion. When we find one or two false statements in a book and they prove to be deliberate ones, it is evident that not a word written by such an author is any longer certain and reliable. But to convince those also who are disposed to champion him I must speak of the principle on which he composes public speeches, harangues to soldiers, the discourses of ambassadors, and, in a word, all utterances of the kind, which, as it

> were, sum up events and hold the whole history together. Can anyone who reads these help noticing that Timaeus had untruthfully reported them in his work, and has done so of set purpose? For he has not set down the words spoken nor the sense of what was really said, but having made up his mind as to what ought to have been said, he recounts all these speeches and all else that follows upon events like a man in a school of rhetoric attempting to speak on a given subject, and shows off his oratorical power, but gives no report of which was actually spoken. The peculiar function of history is to discover, in the first place, the words actually spoken, whatever they were, and next to ascertain the reason why what was done or spoken led to failure or success.… But a writer who passes over in silence the speeches made and the causes of events and in their place introduces false rhetorical exercises and discursive speeches, destroys the peculiar virtue of history. And of this Timaeus especially is guilty, and we all know that his work is full of blemishes of the kind.[69]

At the very least, then, we can say that there was not a consistent view of the legitimacy of the practice of fabricating materials for historical accounts in antiquity. Whereas some writers—Thucydides, and the two objects of Polybius' scorn—accepted the practice, probably out of historiographic necessity, others strenuously objected. The vitriol of Polybius' protest may well suggest that he was in the minority on the matter. In neither side of the debate, in any event, do we find authors likening the practice to forgery. When Jewish authors such as Josephus, or Christian authors such as the anonymous and pseudonymous writers of various Christian Gospels, placed invented speeches on the lips of their protagonists, they were doing what was widely done throughout antiquity. Some writers approved the practice and others demurred.

Speeches and documents are not the only kinds of fabrications in historical writing. Often writers—historians, essayists, polemicists, or most anyone else—fabricated narratives of all sorts about real and fictitious characters: events, episodes, activities, controversies, practices, and on and on. We have seen a small sliver of this kind of fabricating narrative already with Epiphanius, who appears to have invented the ritual practices of the Phibionites, possibly based on his slight knowledge of their theological

views, precisely in order to malign them. In generating such fabricated accounts, Epiphanius stood in a solid line of tradition that goes back as far as our earliest heresiologists. The harsh but undocumented invectives of the letter of Jude in the New Testament come to be fleshed out in its later ideological successors, such as Irenaeus, whose *Adversus Haereses* is the first proto-orthodox heresiological treatise to survive, and which is famous for its accusations against the shocking sexual practices of, for example, the Valentinians, Carpocratians, and Marcosians that I have already mentioned. As I suggested earlier, if one considers the rigorous ethic endorsed by the Gnostic sources themselves, it seems unlikely that any of the charges represent accurate representations; they are more likely fabricated.

Not all early Christian fabrications were malicious, of course. Long before we have any written texts of any kind, stories about Jesus were not only altered in the course of oral transmission, but also generated then: stories about his birth, his activities, his teachings, his controversies, his last days, his death and resurrection. And the fabrications continued long after the New Testament period, as so abundantly and irrefutably attested in the noncanonical accounts of his birth, life, death, and resurrection. And of his afterlife, as in Tertullian's claim that:

> So Tiberius, in whose reign the name of Christian entered the world, hearing from Palestine in Syria information which had revealed the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the Senate, with previous indication of his own approval. The Senators, on the ground that they had not verified the facts, rejected it. Caesar maintained his opinion and threatened dire measures against those who brought accusations against the Christians.[70]

This fabricated account was easily believed by later Christians; it is reiterated by Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.2.2). Further examples could be effortlessly multiplied many times over, for instance, from virtually every detail in the letters and narratives of the so-called Pilate cycle.[71]

So too the preliterary accounts of the apostles eventually embedded in the canonical Acts have their analogues in the later apocryphal Acts, whether stories of Peter raising a smoked tuna from the dead and depriving the magician Simon of his powers of flight in midair, or of John

resuscitating Drusiana and castigating pestiferous bed bugs, or of Paul preaching a message of sexual abstinence that leads to the conversion of his most famous female follower, Thecla.

This final example is commonly cited in works dealing with forgery, by scholars who confuse Tertullian's comments in De baptismo 17 as referring to a presbyter of Asia Minor who allegedly forged the account in Paul's name. Thus, for example, the recent comment from an otherwise fine article by M. Frenschkowski : "This passage [in Tertullian] is significant not least of all because it once and for all disproves the myth of the unproblematic acceptance of pseudepigraphy in a Christian environment."[72] In fact, Tertullian's comments are not directly relevant to the question of whether or not forgery was widely seen as acceptable. The presbyter in question was charged not with forging an account but with fabricating it.

> But if the writings which wrongly go under Paul's name, claim Thecla's example as a licence for women's teaching and baptizing, let them know that, in Asia, the presbyter who composed that writing, as if he were augmenting Paul's fame from his own store, after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office (sciant in asia presbyterum qui eam scripturam construxit quasi titulo pauli de suo cumulans conuictum atque confessum id se amore pauli fecisse loco decessisse).[73]

The reconstruction of Tertullian's text is debated,[74] but the question of the presbyter's crime need not be. The "writings that wrongly go under Paul's name" were not accounts that Paul was alleged to have written. He was the subject of these writings, not the reputed author. At least as they have been handed down to us—assuming that what we have is what Tertullian is referring to[75]—the Acts are anonymous. The presbyter was being faulted, then, for making up stories about Paul that were not historically accurate.

In other instances the narrative fabrications of the early Christians served polemical purposes, although at times more subtly. As already pointed out, for example, stories of Jesus as a miracle-working wunderkind from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas functioned to discount an adoptionistic Christology that claimed that Jesus received his divine sonship—and so his

divine power—only at his baptism. The story of Jesus emerging from his tomb as tall as a mountain from the Gospel of Peter functioned to show that his resurrection was decidedly bodily, in the face of claims that his afterlife was purely in the spirit, while his body experienced corruption. Stories of Peter besting Simon Magus in a series of miracle-working contests from the Acts of Peter illustrated the superiority of the proto-orthodox lineage of the Roman episcopacy over against various groups of Gnostic contenders. Stories of Pilate, Tiberius, and other Roman officials recognizing the clear divinity of Jesus from the Pilate Cycle functioned to counter the polemical charges of the cultured despisers of the new faith among the pagans, such as Celsus and Porphyry.

Christian fabrications served other purposes as well. Some satisfied early Christian curiosity about unknown aspects of the lives of Jesus and his followers (where was Jesus, exactly, during the time between his death and resurrection? Thus the Gospel of Nicodemus); others provided edificatory tales (God was on the side of the apostles in the face of horrible Roman opposition, as in the Apocryphal Acts); yet others were no doubt entertaining (Jesus' miraculous deeds as the mischievous five-year-old son of God in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas); some more directly supported one theological or ideological view or another (Paul's preaching of continence for eternal life, in the Acts of Thecla); and others performed apologetic service (the stories of the Protevangelium as answers to the charges against Mary, Joseph, and Jesus on the pen of Celsus).

Given their wide functionality, were such invented narratives generally seen as acceptable by the early Christians? On one hand, most Christians who heard such stories almost certainly did not consider them as anything but historical, and so were in no position to pass judgment on their character as fabrications. What would they have said if they were shown, beyond any reasonable doubt, that such stories were made up? At the end of the day, it is impossible to say. But it does seem likely that Christians who approved of the stories and the lessons they conveyed would not have been particularly disturbed, taking, possibly, a Thucydidian attitude toward them. Christians with alternative perspectives, on the other hand, or non-Christians of all stripes would doubtless have considered such fabrications worthy of attack, more along the lines of a Polybius.

Falsifications

Even more closely related to the phenomenon of forgery is the practice of falsifying a text. When an author forges a writing, claiming to be someone other than who she is, she asserts that her words are those of another. So too a copyist who alters a text by adding a few words, or by interpolating entire passages, or by rewriting the text in other ways, is making the implicit claim that his own words—the ones he has interpolated or generated himself—are the words of the author of the (rest of the) text.

Textual alteration was widely discussed in antiquity, and just as widely condemned. Our earliest reference appears to be in Herodotus, who mentions a collector of oracles named Onomacritus, friend and counselor of the tyrant Pisistratus, who earlier in his life had been discovered to have inserted an oracle of his own into the verses of Musaeus, to the effect that the islands off Lemnos would disappear under water. Lasus of Hermione, a poet and musician who was Pindar's teacher, evidently suspected Onomacritus of making the interpolation and reported it to Hipparchus, who promptly banished Onomacritus from Athens.[76]

Onomacritus had a wide reputation for interpolating oracles into the alleged writings of Musaeus. Pausanias, for example, gives another instance: "I have read a poem in which Mousaios was able to fly, by the gift of the North-east wind; I think Onomakritos wrote it; nothing of Mousaios exists for certain except the *Hymn to Demeter*."[77] And Plutarch as well: "I forbear to mention how much blame men like Onomacritus, Prodicus, and Cinaethon have brought upon themselves from the oracles by foisting upon them a tragic diction and a grandiloquence of which they have had no need, nor have I any kindly feeling toward their changes."[78] Even the Christian Clement recounts the by then traditional view: "Onomacritus of Athens, the reputed author of the poems attributed to Orpheus, is to be found in the reign of the Pisistratides *circa* the fiftieth Olympiad" (*Stromateis 1.21*).[79]

Strabo reports on an earlier Athenian textual alteration, this time in Homer's Iliad. In this case the falsification, made either by Pisistratus or Solon, had clear political implications, as it supported the Athenians' claim to the island of Salamis:

> At the present time the island is held by the Athenians, although in early times there was strife between them and the Megarians for its possession. Some say that it was Peisistratus, others Solon, who

> inserted in the *Catalogue of Ships* immediately after the verse, "and Aias brought twelve ships from Salamis," [Iliad 2, 557] the verse, "and, bringing them, halted them where the battalions of the Athenians were stationed," and then used the poet as a witness that the island had belonged to the Athenians from the beginning. But the critics do not accept this interpretation, because many of the verses bear witness to the contrary.[80]

Sometimes writings were falsified for philosophical rather than political reasons. Diogenes Laertius, for example, reports that the librarian of Pergamum, the Stoic Athenodorus, was condemned at trial for falsifying Stoic writings by deleting problematic passages from Zeno, founder of the sect:

> Isidorus likewise affirms that the passages disapproved by the [Stoic] school were expunged from his [Zeno's] works by Athenodorus the Stoic, who was in charge of the Pergameme library; and that afterwards, when Athenodorus was detected and compromised (φωραθέντος τοῦ Ἀθηνοδώρου καὶ κινδυνεύσαντος), they were replaced. So much concerning the passages in his writings which are regarded as spurious (περὶ τῶν ἀθετουμένων αὐτοῦ). (*Lives*, 7.34)

The falsification of texts of Homer, of course, generated early classical scholarship, especially as associated with the library in Alexandria.[81]

Falsification of texts was also a matter hotly contested within Christian circles of the first four centuries. Heretics were roundly and widely condemned for altering the texts of Scripture in light of their own doctrines.[82] Among the earliest and most vitriolic accusers was Tertullian, who famously assaulted Marcion on these grounds:

> I say that mine is true: Marcion makes that claim for his. I say that Marcion's is falsified: Marcion says the same of mine. Who shall decide between us? Only such a reckoning of dates, as will assume that authority belongs to that which is found to be older, and will prejudge as corrupt that which is convicted of having come later.

> For in so far as the false is a corruption of the true, to that extent must the truth have preceded that which is false. An object must have been in existence before anything is done to it, as what it is in itself must be prior to any opposition to it. … Certainly that is why he has expunged all the things that oppose his view, that are in accord with the Creator, on the plea that they have been woven in by his partisans; but has retained those that accord with his opinion.[83]

As is clear, Marcion leveled the same charges against his own theological opponents, deemed as well to preserve false teachings.

False teachers were known to alter the texts not only of Scripture but also of any work that might prove harmful to their cause. And so the complaint of Dionysius of Corinth with respect to his own writings:

> When my fellow-Christians invited me to write letters to them I did so. These the devil's apostles have filled with tares, taking away some things and adding others. For them the woe is reserved. Small wonder then if some have dared to tamper even with the word of the Lord Himself, when they have conspired to mutilate my own humble efforts. (quoted in Eusebius *H.E*. 4, 23, 12)

Or the charges of Rufinus against heretical falsifiers who corrupted the writings of church authorities who opposed them:

> The heretics have followed this example of their father and this skill of their teacher. Whenever they have found treatises by renowned writers of old that have discussed things that pertain to the glory of God in detail and faithfully, so that every believer could make progress and receive instruction by reading them, they have not spared their writings, but have poured in the poisonous filth of their own doctrines, whether by interpolating what they had said, or by inserting things that they had not said. By this means, of course, the assertion of the man's own heresy was more easily advanced under the names of all the most learned and renowned among the ecclesiastical writers in view of the fact that some

> brilliant men among the Catholics appeared to have thought likewise.[84]

The normal way of falsifying a text was simply by altering it in the process of re-copying it. A particularly egregious example is cited by Origen with respect to the transcript of one of his debates:

> For a certain author of a heresy, when a discussion was held between us in the presence of many persons and was recorded, took the document from those who had written it down. He added what he wanted to it, removed what he wanted, and changed what seemed good to him. Then he carried it around as if it were from me, pouring scorn conspicuously on the things that he himself had composed. The brethren who are in Palestine were indignant over this. They sent a man to me at Athens who was to receive from me the authentic copy. Prior to this I had not even re-read or revised the work, but it was lying there in such a neglected state that it could hardly be found. But I sent it, and I say with God as my witness that, when I met the man who had falsified the work, [and asked him] why he had done this, he answered, as if he were giving me satisfaction: "Because I wanted to adorn and purify that discussion."[85]

Clearly, falsifiers of the text, like others who engaged in one kind of literary deception or another, felt both justified in what they did and offended by those who took umbrage. On other occasions falsifiers could be remarkably crafty, as in the case discussed by Rufinus about a manuscript containing the writings of Athanasius. It is a complicated story. Bishop Damasus was seeking to reconcile the Apollinarians to the rest of the church and had a theological treatise drawn up that could be agreed on by all sides. In this treatise, the term "Homo Dominicus" was applied to Christ, but the Apollinarists objected on the ground that it was a novelty, not part of the sanctioned terminology of their theological forebears. The author of the document attempted to defend himself by appealing to an earlier writing of Athanasius, which also used the term. But a representative of the Apollinarists found a way to undercut the precedent that this writing

presented:

> When he had received the manuscript, he devised an unprecedented method of falsification. He erased the very passage in which the words were found, and then wrote in again the same words that he had erased. He returned the manuscript, and it was accepted as is.
>
> The debate about this very expression is stirred up once again; the manuscript is brought forward as evidence; the expression in question is found in it, but in a position where there had been an erasure in the manuscript. The man who brought forward the manuscript is discredited, since the erasure seemed to be proof of corruption and falsification.[86]

No one was more famously connected with the alteration of inherited theological writings than Rufinus, who explicitly tells his readers that while translating the works of Origen he came upon passages that, in his opinion, could not have actually been written by him. His obvious solution to the problem was to return the texts to their pristine state by eliminating the offensive passages. As he states the matter in the Preface to his translation of *De principiis:*

> Wherever, therefore, I have found in his books anything contrary to the reverent statements made by him about the Trinity in other places, I have either omitted it as a corrupt and interpolated passage, or reproduced it in a form that agrees with the doctrine which I have often found him affirming elsewhere.[87]

Or as he says in his *Apology to Anastasius:*

> I used my own discretion in cutting out not a few passages; but only those as to which I had come to suspect that the thing had not been so stated by Origen himself; and the statement appeared to me in these cases to have been inserted by others, because in other places I had found the author state the matter in a catholic sense.[88]

And so we have the grounds for one of the vitriolic exchanges with Jerome, who responds to such editorial activity with characteristic zeal:

> I wish to know who gave you permission to cut out a number of passages from the work you were translating? You were asked to turn a Greek book into Latin, not to correct it; to draw out another man's words, not to write a book of your own. You confess, by the fact of pruning away so much, that you did not do what you were asked. You say that you have cut out many things from the Greek, but you say nothing of what you have put in. Were the parts cut out good or bad? Bad, I suppose. Was what you kept good or bad? Good, I presume; for you could not translate the bad.… It is a strange thing if you are to act like an unjust censor, who is himself guilty of the crime, and are allowed at your will to expel some from the Senate and keep others in it.[89]

The widespread disapprobation of altering texts does not appear to have done much to stop copyists from engaging in such activities. One might nonetheless wonder what steps were taken to ensure the integrity of a text once put in circulation. The reality is that not much could be done. Occasionally there was legislation designed to protect against textual falsifications. The best known is the instance recounted in Pseudo-Plutarch's *Lycurgus*, the Athenian orator who urged passage of the law that the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were to be kept in a public archive, and that public officials were to use these official copies to check all performances in order to guarantee that there were no departures from the text. Any actor who did not stick closely to the "official" script was allegedly barred from further appearances on the stage.

This instance was the exception to the ancient rule. Without laws governing literary property, texts could be protected only by the relatively ineffective ploys of moral suasion and literary curses. Of curses, the best known is the conclusion to the Apocalypse of John:

> I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to them the plagues that are described in this book; and if anyone removes any of the words

> of the book of this prophecy, God will remove his share from the tree of life and from the holy city that is described in this book. (Rev. 22:19)[90]

Description of an analogous curse can be found in Jewish circles in the Letter of Aristeas. Once the translators of the Septuagint had miraculously produced their text, the leaders of the Jewish community are reported to have decided that its wording was never to be changed: "There was general approval of what they said, and they commanded that a curse should be laid, as was their custom, on anyone who should alter the version by any addition or change to any part of the written text, or any deletion either."[91]

Note the words: "as was their custom." Such curses were typical, not unusual. They recur in Christian writings of our period, for example in Irenaeus' now lost *Ogdoad*, as quoted by Eusebius:

> If, dear reader, you should transcribe this little book, I adjure you by the Lord Jesus Christ and by His glorious advent, when He comes to judge the living and the dead, to compare your transcript and correct it carefully by this copy, from which you have made your transcript. This adjuration likewise you must transcribe and include in your copy. (*H.E*. 5.20)

Or in the lesser known but equally threatening comment near the conclusion of the Coptic *History of Joseph the Carpenter* : "Whoever takes away from these words or adds to them, and so considers me a liar, I will soon take vengeance on him" (30.7).[92]

It should be clear on a number of grounds that the alteration of texts was widely condemned in antiquity by authors who were pagan, Jewish, and Christian. Writers did not want copyists or editors to alter their words. They chastised and cursed anyone who did so. When falsifiers were detected in the act, they were censured, abused, and sometimes punished. An author's words were to be kept intact, because they were the author's own.

If authors objected to having words wrongly placed on their pens by falsifiers, it does not take much to imagine how they would react to words wrongly placed on their pens by forgers. In these instances a deceptive writer does not merely interpolate or alter the words of a text, implicitly

claiming them to be the words of the author; he instead invents a text out of whole cloth, claiming that it presents the words of the author falsely named. In both cases the question is whether the written text derives from the person who is being claimed as its author.

1. See, for example, the authors mentioned in note 32 on p. 78 and on pp. 128–32.

2. "Die Begriffe Pseudepigraphie und Pseudonymität sind nicht einfach synonym zu gebrauchen. Bei der Pseudonymität wird ein fiktiver Autor gewählt, bei der Pseudepigraphie wird das Werk einem realen Autor zugeschrieben." In "Von Paulus zu 'Paulus,'" in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 376.

3. I am quite aware of the problems posed by the notion of "intention." When Wimsatt and Beardslee first presented their claims about the "intentional fallacy," it was to explain and justify some of the hermeneutical principles of the "new criticism" (see W. K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1954). Their concerns were principally literary, not historiographic. Philosophers as well have devoted considerable attention to the problem, and the issues obviously do have clear historiographic implications. In the second edition of my book *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, I set forth in greater detail my views of the matter, specifically, of how historians who recognize the theoretical problems with reconstructing past intentions can nonetheless use the category of "intention" as a functional category (*Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University, 2011, pp. 32–33 and 337–41). Here I am going a step further to claim that reasonable assumptions about (past) intention can be made. A good example of how historians can proceed is provided by Jason BeDuhn, "The Historical Assessment of Speech Acts: Clarifications of Austin and Skinner for the Study of Religions" in *MTSR* 12 (2000): 477–505. At the end of the day, persons both past and present have always had intentions, whether these are (completely) accessible or not. For BeDuhn, reconstructing intentions is a matter of establishing reasonable probabilities. The same can be said, of course, of all historical work: history as an act of "establishing the past" is itself nothing but plausible reconstruction.

4. "… macht die Täuschungsabsicht, die jenseits eines literarischen Zweckes liegt, ein Pseudepigraphon zur Fälschung." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 94.

5. "Nur wo Täuschungsabsicht, also dolus malus, vorliegt, wird der Tatbestand der Fälschung erfüllt. Insofern gehört die Fälschung zur Lüge." Ibid., p. 13.

6. Armin Daniel Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum*, WUNT 138 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 11–12. Someone familiar not with Baum's work but only with his title might wonder how his book differs from mine. Baum's overarching concerns involve the question of canon. Given the fact—which he establishes forcefully—that ancient persons, including Christians, considered forgery to be lying, is it possible that Scripture could contain any forgeries? This simply is not my concern. One of Baum's subsidiary concerns is to establish that a book that was not authored by the person named is not a forgery if its contents can be traced back directly to that person. That is a matter on which we disagree, for reasons that will be evident in the course of my study. See especially pp. 87–90.

7. *Prolegomena;* CAG XII/1, 13, 4–14, 4. Greek text and German translation in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 239–41.

8. There may be some confusion over how the term is used in one of our key authors, Eusebius, since in his famous account of canonical writings in *H.E.* 3.25 he lists the Shepherd of Hermas as a νόθον, a seemingly inappropriate term for an orthonymous writing. But in fact the term may be entirely appropriate, since Eusebius seems to have followed his hero Origen in assuming that the Hermas claimed as the book's author was to be identified as the companion of Paul from Romans 16:14 (*H.E.* 3.3). Eusebius may have "known" that the author was not "that" Hermas, and therefore the book—along with the Acts of Paul, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Didache of the Apostles, and Barnabas—is not by the person named. Like these others, then, it is a νόθον, not fathered by the person named as its author. David Nienhuis (*Not By Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon*, Waco: Baylor University, 2007, p. 65) is off the mark when he thinks that Eusebius means that the Shepherd is not a "legitimate offspring of the historic, apostolic church." This understanding stretches the meaning of the term in an idiosyncratic direction, failing to consider its typical usage both in Eusebius and in the

broader Greco-Roman world. The term refers to authorship, not to standing within a religious tradition.

9. We will consider a host of examples later. For now it is enough to cite the suggestion (not meant in humor) of I. Howard Marshall, that instead of pseudonymity and pseudepigraphy—terms that employ the suggestion of falsehood—we use the more neutral terms allonymity and allopigraphy. His suggestion is rooted in his belief that if someone other than Paul wrote the Pastoral epistles, he did not mean to deceive anyone about it. I will have more to say about that—I think he is precisely wrong—in a later chapter. For now, I might simply ask which set of terms is true to the ancient discourse about the phenomenon and which one injects modern sensitivities into it. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 83–84.

0. It should not be objected that since the Ascension of Isaiah is being recorded by Sebna the Scribe (1.5) Isaiah cannot be the author. Sebna is allegedly taking dictation in some form, as typically happened when authors "wrote" books. When the account turns to the first person, it is clear that Isaiah himself is doing the dictation. But this is simply an authorial ploy, a claim to be Isaiah by someone living 850 years later.

1. Stephen Gero, "The Infancy Gospel of Thomas: A Study of the Textual and Literary Problems," *NovT* 13 (1971): 46–80, esp. p. 59.

2. See the discussion on pp. 505–6.

3. "Die zuletzt genannte Form der Schriftstellerei, bei der ein Gott als der Urheber des schriftlichen Denkmals angesehen wird, kann als mythische oder 'religiöse Pseudepigraphie' bezeichnet werden. 'Echt' ist sie so lange, wie der Glaube an einen Gott als Offenbarer lebendig erlebt wird.… 'echte' religiöse Pseudepigraphie [konnte] nur noch dort auftreten, wohin die rationale Denkweise noch nicht gedrungen war, das heißt vornehmlich in den Randgebieten der griechisch-römischen Welt." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 36.

4. "Daraus hat sich ergeben, daß eine große Anzahl psn Schriften nur aus religiösen und religions-psychologischen Entstehungsgründen zu erklären ist. Aus der Eigenart mythischen Denkens und echter religiöser Ergriffenheit gewinnt der Verfasser für sein Vorgehen eine solche Überzeugungskraft, daß von bewusster Täuschung keine Rede sein kann, ja daß ihm die moralische Wahrheitsfrage gar nicht zum Problem wird und er darum seine Entlarvung nicht befürchten konnte." Josef A. Sint,

Pseudonymität im Altertum: Ihre Formen und ihre Gründe (Innsbruck: Universitätverlag Wagner, 1960), p. 163.

5. Speyer claims that one can determine if a writing falls under the category based on "observations concerning language, style, composition and not least of all the psychology of such a writing" (Beobachtung von Sprache, Stil, Komposition und nicht zuletzt der Psychologie einer derartigen Schrift; p. 37). But he never explains the criteria that are to be used in making the judgment on these, or any other, grounds. As a result, the corpus of "genuine religious pseudepigrapha" appears to be a group of writings determined on the basis of a critic's "best guess."
6. "Donc, l'hypothèse de la pseudépigraphie religieuse qui est 'echt' est non seulement gratuite, elle est inutile." E. J. Bickerman, "Faux littéraires dans l'antiquité classique en marge d'un livre récent," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), p. 197.
7. Horst R. Balz, "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum: Überlegungen zum literarischen und theologischen Problem der urchristlichen und gemeinantiken Pseudepigraphie," *ZTK* 66 (1969): 412–13.
8. Pier Franco Beatrice, "Forgery, Propaganda and Power in Christian Antiquity," *JAC.E* 33 (2002): 45.
9. K. Aland, "The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries," *JBL* 12 (1961): 44.
0. Ibid., pp. 44–45.
1. Ibid., pp. 48.
2. "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie," p. 419.
3. David G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 43; italics his.
4. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 72; cf. p. 102 and passim. Italics his.
5. *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 66.
6. Harry Y. Gamble, "Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphy und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 359, 361.
7. See n. 35 below.
8. R. Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci* (Paris: A. F. Didot, 1873; reprinted Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1965); C. D. N. Costa, *Greek Fictional Letters*

(New York: Oxford, 2001); Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Other useful studies include Herwig Görgemanns, "Epistolography," *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); M. Hose, *Kleine griechische Literaturgeschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999); M. Luther Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

9. Costa, *Greek Fictional Letters*, p. xiv.

0. There are debates over the genre of the "epistolary novel," that is, the use of fictional letters in order to create a coherent narrative. Rosenmeyer, for example, contends that there is only one set of letters that fits the description, the letters of Chion. (This obviously raises the question of how a genre with one literary representative is actually a genre.) Hose, *Kleine griechische Literaturgeschichte* finds seven.

1. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, p. 195.

2. Ibid., p. 207.

3. Ibid., p. 202.

4. Martina Janssen, "Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 131–35.

5. This is the argument of the editor of the major critical edition, Claude W. Barlow, *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam* (Rome: American Academy, 1938): "Although the emphasis in a rhetor's school was upon oratory and the characteristic method of attaining oratorical perfection was by discussion and declamation, it seems nevertheless that writing as well as speaking must have formed a part of the training. The Correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul might then be considered as an exercise on a fictitious subject assigned by the teacher. … The possibility should also be mentioned that the Correspondence is the work of more than one hand, perhaps of two or three scholars in the same school, working in competition on a set problem" (p. 92). I owe this reference to Pablo Molina. See further discussion on pp. 520–27 below.

6. Syme, *Emperors and Biography*, pp. 1–16.

7. See pp. 11, 13, 76, 95.

8. Theodor Hopfner, *Über die Geheimlehren von Jamblichus*. (Leipzig: Theosophisches Verlagshaus, 1922), p. x. For evaluation, see Emma C.

Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson B. Hershbell, trs. and eds. *Iamblichus On the Mysteries* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. xxviii.

9. *Iamblichus*, p. xxviii.

0. Ibid., p. xxx.

1. See her full discussion of pseudonyms, "Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen," pp. 137–47.

2. *Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 34.

3. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.112.

4. Translation of Donald A. Russell in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2002).

5. Translation of J. C. Rolfe in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1914).

6. Thus Speyer (p. 38 n. 4), for example, notes the following: B. Capelle, "Un homiliaire de l'evêque arien Maximin," *RBén* 34 (1922): 81–108, and "Les homélies 'De lectionibus euangeliorum' de Maximin l'arien," *RBén* 40 (1928): 49–86: works of the Arian Maximus were transmitted as works of Maximus of Turin; and P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1964), pp. 293–302: a poem attributed to Paulinus of Nola was actually written by Paulinus of Pella.

7. Olympiodorus *Prolegomena;* CAG XII/1, 13, 4–5; Elias *In Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria* (ed. A. Busse: Berlin, 1900), 128.1–22.

8. These and all translations of Eusebius are drawn from G. A. Williamson, *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine;* rev. and ed. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin, 1965).

9. See V. Buchheit, "Rufinus von Aquileja als Fälscher des Adamantiosdialogs" in *ByzZ* 51 (1958): 314–28.

0. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 40; the reference from Wilamowitz occurs in note 4: *Göttingenische gelehrte Anzeigen* 158 (1896), p. 634 n. 1.

1. Theodoret, *Haer, Fab. Comp*. 2.5; J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, and Poly-carp*, part 1, *Clement*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1889), pp. 377–80.

2. Translation of C. B. Gulick in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1969).

3. Miroslav Marcovich. *Pseudo-Iustinus: Cohortatio ad Graecos, de Monarchia, Oratio ad Graecos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990).

4. Thus the so-called thirty-seventh letter of Jerome, containing a dialogue of Jerome and Augustine, came to be assigned to Jerome himself, even though the author clearly differentiates himself from Jerome. So too the Dialogue *Contra Felicianum Arianum* came to be attributed to the main speaker Augustine, even though it was probably by Vivilius of Thapsus (see Ficker, *Studien zu Vigilius von Thapsus* 1897, pp. 77–79). In a similar way, the Dialogue *Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam* was also assigned to Augustine (see C. Lambot, "L'écrit attribute à S. Augustin *Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam*" in *RBén* 58 [1948], 177–222, esp. 183–84). On all these, see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 32–33.

5. As expressed in various publications; see Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 2000), pp. 34–56. Among refutations of Hengel's views, see, for example, F. Bovon, "The Synoptic Gospels and the Noncanonical Acts of the Apostles," *HTR* 81 (1988): 20–23.

6. Translation of Ernest Evans, *Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem: Books 4 and 5* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 271. All translations of this work will be from this edition.

7. Robert Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, eds., *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 22.

8. "Elle nous aura permis d'établir—malgré la modestie de nos sources et en admettant que nos textes soient bien recevables—que le plagiat et la forgerie d'oeuvres littéraires pouvaient être considérés comme des délits et sanctionnés." Bernard Legras, "La sanction du plagiat littéraire en droit grec et hellénistique," in E. Cantarella et G. Thür, éds., *Symposion* 1999 (Pazo de Mariñan, 6–9 septembre 1999; Cologne-Weimar-Vienne, Böhlau, 2003), 459.

9. *Lives*. 5.92. Unless otherwise indicated, this and the following quotations are taken from the translation of R. D. Hicks in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1925).

0. Translation of Walter C. A. Ker, *LCL* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

1. Translation of Granger; see p. 14 n. 11.
2. *Histories*, 9.2.1; quotation from the translation of W. R. Paton from *Polybius: The Histories*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1922–1927).
3. Translation of H. Rackham, *Pliny: Natural History*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1938).
4. See p. 14.
5. I, 22. Translation of Charles Foster Smith, *Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War: Books I and II*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1919).
6. *Ad Verum Imp*. 2, 1, 14. Translation of C. R. Haines, *Marcus Aurelius Fronto*, LCL, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1919), p. 43.
7. Translation of H. M. Hubbell, *Cicero V*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).
8. *Histories*, 2. 56.8–12; translation of W. R. Paton, *Polybius: The Histories*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1922).
9. Ibid., 12, 25a1–25b4.
0. *Apology* 5; Rudolph Arbesmann, *Tertullian*, FC, 10 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1950), pp. 20–21. Subsequent quotations of this work will be from this edition.
1. For introductions, texts, and translations, see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 419–567.
2. "Diese Passage (in Tertullian) ist nicht zuletzt von Bedeutung, weil sie ein für alle mal die Legende von der problemlosen Akzeptanz von Pseudepigraphie in einem christlichen Umfeld widerlegen sollte." "Erkannte Pseudepigraphie?" in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 195.
3. Translation of S. Thelwall, *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 677.
4. See Willy Rordorf, "Tertullien et les Actes de Paul (à propos de bapt 17, 5)," in *Lex Orandi Lex Credendi*, ed. Gerardo J. Békés e Giustino Farnedi (Rome: Editrice anselmiana 1980), pp. 475–84.
5. For a contrary opinion see Stevan L. Davies, "Women, Tertullian and the Acts of Paul," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 139–43, who argues that Tertullian is referring not to our extant Acts of Paul but to a lost pseudepigraphic letter of Paul. For an effective refutation, see Rordorf, "Tertullien et les Actes."

6. Oracles were important in Greek cities and were occasionally consulted, especially in times of crisis. The integrity of their text was, as a result, hugely important. It is not clear, however, why the sinking of the islands off Lemnos would have been such a politically charged issue. On the importance of Greek oracles, and thus of their integrity, see Hugh Bowden, "Oracles for Sale," in Peter Derow and Robert Parker, eds., *Herodotus and His World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 256–74. My thanks to Prof. Bowden for the reference and for his communications on this topic. See also Michael A. Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

7. Attica, 1, 22. 7. Translation of Peter Levi, *Pausanias Guide to Greece*, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1971).

8. Oracles at Delphi 407B-G. Translation of Frank C. Babbitt *Plutarch: Moralia*, vol. 5. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936).

9. Translation of John Ferguson, trans., *Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis: Books One to Three* (FC 85; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), p. 119.

0. *Geography* 9.1.10. Translation of H. L. Jones in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1927).

1. See esp. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *The History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

2. The most extensive catalogue of these accusations is in A. Bludau, *Die Schriftfälschungen der Häretiker: Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik der Bibel*. (Münster: Aschendorf, 1925). Bludau claims—wrongly in my view—that these charges were more commonly directed against heretics for misinterpreting, not falsifying, Scripture. This view is largely based on Bludau's somewhat odd notion that since there were so many debates over Scripture in the early centuries, copyists (heretical or otherwise) would have been reluctant to change the text. This is not a widely held view today; for an alternative, see my study *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*.

3. *Adv. Marc*. 4.4; translation of Ernst, *Tertullian*, pp. 267, 275.

4. *De adult libr*. 7; translation of Thomas P. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus, Apology for Origen; with the Letter of Rufinus, On the Falsification of the Books of Origen* (FC 120; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 125.

5. Quoted in Rufinus, *De adult. libr*. 7; translation of Schenck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 29.

6. *De adult libr*. 13; ibid., p. 135. See Mark Vessey, "The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature: A Case Study," *JECS* 4 (1996): 495–513.

7. Preface of Rufinus; translation of G. W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), p. lxiii.

8. Translation of W. H. Fremantle in *NPNF*, 2nd series, vol. 3.

9. *Adv. Ruf*. 2.11. Translation of *NPNF*.

0. For the formula "neither adding nor removing," see, among others, W. C. van Unnik, "De la règle MHTE ΠΡΟΣΘΕΙΝΑΙ MHTE ΑΦΕΛΕΙΝ dans l'histoire du canon," *VC* 3 (1949): 1–35. W. C. van Unnik, "'Die Formel nichts wegnehmen, nichts hinzufügen' bei Josephus," in idem, *Josephus als historischer Schriftsteller* (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1978), 26–49; C. Schäublin, "Μήτε προσθεῖναι μήτ' ἀφελεῖν," *MH* 31 (1974): 144–49; L. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 27; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 37–46; M. Mülke, *Der Autor und sein Text: Die Verfälschung des Originals im Urteil antiker Untersuchungen* (Untersuchungen zur Antiken Literatur und Geschichte 93; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 20–27, 266–68. I am obliged to Zlatko Pleše for these references.

1. Letter of Aristeas, 311. Translation of R. J. H. Shutt, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

2. Translation of Zlatko Pleše, in Ehrman and Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 191.

CHAPTER FOUR

Forgery in Antiquity

Aspects of the Broader Phenomenon

Having looked at related phenomena from the Greco-Roman world, we can now redirect our focus to literary forgery itself, the practice of producing literary works with false authorial claims. The bulk of this study will consider the use of literary forgery and counterforgery in Christian polemical contexts of the first four centuries CE. To set the stage for that discussion, we need to look at the broader phenomenon in pagan, Jewish, and Christian antiquity, considering its extent and its widespread recognition and condemnation; the motives that drove authors to make their false claims; techniques they used to make these claims believable; the self-justifications that they made, or may have made, for engaging in the practice; and the means of detection used by ancient critics to expose forgery when they found it.

EXTENT OF THE PHENOMENON

It is impossible to quantify the extent of ancient forgery, although everyone who has worked seriously on the problem recognizes that it is a vast field.[1]

Pagan Literature

I will not attempt to provide here a comprehensive listing either of works identified as forgeries in pagan antiquity or pagan works now known or thought to be forgeries—two overlapping but not coterminous corpora. Numerous instances will be addressed throughout this chapter and the next. Instead, to give an idea of the extent of the field here at the outset, I will summarize some of the incidental and direct comments about forgery in just one book of Diogenes Laertius' ten-volume work on the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.

In 2.39 Diogenes indicates that the (published) speech of Polycrates against Socrates is not authentic (μὴ εἶναι ἀληθῆ τὸν λόγον) since it mentions the rebuilding of the walls by Conon, which occurred ten years after Socrates' death. In 2.42 he indicates that the paean to Apollo and Artemis allegedly written by Socrates between the time of his condemnation and death (two lines of which Diogenes quotes) are debated: the critic Dionysodorus maintained that Socrates did not write it. So too Pisistratus of Ephesus denied that the works of Aeschines were actually written by him; the critic Persaeius attributed most of the seven books in question to Pasiphon, of the school of Eretria (2.61). With respect to Dialogues involving Socrates, we learn that Panaetius thought that those produced by Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes, and Aeschines were authentic; but he doubted the authenticity of those ascribed to Phaedo and Euclides and he rejected all the others as inauthentic (2.64). The six books of essays attributed to Aristippus are said to have been accepted by some critics, whereas Sosicrates of Rhodes claimed that Aristippus had written none of them at all (2.84). As to the dialogues allegedly produced by Phaedo, Diogenes accepts as genuine (γνησίους) the "Zopyrus" and "Simon"; the "Nicias" is doubtful (δισταζόμενον), as is "The Elders"; the "Medius" is claimed "by some" critics to be the work of Aeschines or of Polyaenus; and some also attribute the "Cobblers' Tales" to Aeschines (2.105). Nine of the dialogues of Glaucon are thought to be authentic, but there are also extant thirty-two others that are considered spurious (οἱ νοθεύονται) (2.124). With respect to the "Medea" of Euripides, some claim that it is instead the work of Neophron of Sicyon (2.134).

All of this in just one volume of one ancient writing. In the same volume Diogenes also mentions two cases of plagiarism.[2] And Diogenes is not

unique: as we have already seen, and will see yet more presently, there was a widespread practice of criticism among pagan literati of our period.

In Jewish Literature

The documented or suspected instances of forgery among Jewish writers of the time are not as extensive, in no small measure because there were far fewer Jewish writings of any kind.[3] In an earlier period, the so-called writing prophets of the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve), if they wrote at all, wrote in their own names (e.g., Isaiah, Amos) or anonymously (2 Isaiah; 3 Isaiah; editorial editions to Amos and others, for example). Only two books of the Hebrew Bible can be considered forgeries in the sense that I am using it here. The visions of Daniel 7–12 claim to be written by the sage and prophet of the sixth century BCE but were almost certainly produced, in reality, four hundred years later by someone assuming the false name for reasons of his own. (I will be dealing with the question of apocalypses as pseudepigrapha shortly.) The book of Qoheleth is a textbook case of a non-pseudepigraphic forgery: its author clearly indicates that he is to be taken as Solomon (chs. 1–2), without naming himself, although he, once again, was writing many centuries after Solomon had passed from the scene.

Outside of the Hebrew Bible, orthonymous writings were, in the words of Annette Reed, "surprisingly rare among Second Temple Jews."[4] She names as exceptions ben Sira, Aristobulus, Eupolemus, Artapanus, and later Philo and Josephus. The authenticity of other works, such as the writings of Hecataeus and Manetho, are today hotly contested.[5] Even so, there are well-known forgeries, including the Wisdom of Solomon[6]; the Letter of Aristeas[7]; the Letter of Demetrius of Phaleron to Ptolemy II within the letter of Aristeas; the Decree of Artaxerses in the additions to the book of Esther; 3 Ezra 6.7–22, 6.24–27, 6.27–34, 8.9–24; the letters from and to the rulers of Sparta in 1 Macc. 12.2, 5–23, 14.20–23 (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 12.225–28; 13.165–70); the letters between Solomon and Vaphres quoted in Eusebius (*Prep. Evang*. 9.31–32); between Solomon and Suron King of Tyre and Sidon (*Prep. Evang*. 9.33–34), the Decree of Alexander the Great in Sulpicius (*Severus Chron*. 2.17.2); and the Letter forged in the name of

Herod's son Alexander mentioned by Josephus (*War* 1.26.3). Examples could be multiplied.[8]

A special question arises concerning the literary character of Jewish apocalypses, books certainly written in the name of someone other than the actual author. But is it appropriate in these cases to speak of "forgery," when pseudepigraphic authorship functioned as a standard element of the generic expectation of the works? In response, an obverse question might well be posed: Is there any reason that an entire (or almost entire) genre could not comprise, by its very nature, forgeries?

There has been extensive scholarship devoted to the question of the authorship of the Jewish apocalypses. None was more initially influential but subsequently renounced as D. H. Russell's work *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic 200 B.C.-A.D. 100*.[9] Russell contended that the pseudonymous authorship of Jewish apocalypses could be explained on the grounds of (1) corporate personality, in which ancient Jewish authors did not clearly separate the individual from his or her larger social group; (2) contemporaneity, in which Jews at the time did not neatly differentiate between the past and present; and (3) extension of personality, in which Jewish authors, such as those of the apocalypses, identified so closely with earlier figures that they could legitimately claim to write in their names. Each of these three points, as well as Russell's overall theory, has been effectively discounted by subsequent scholarship devoted both to the specific field of apocalyptic literature[10] and to pseudepigraphy more broadly.[11]

Apart from Russell, however, there is a broad, though not universal, sense among scholars of Jewish apocalypticism that the use of pseudonymity was so widespread as a practice that it must have been seen as conventional by the authors who produced the work and, correspondingly, "seen through" by their readers, who were not at all convinced that the resultant books were actually written by Abraham, Enoch, Ezra, Baruch, and so on. This broad sense is open to dispute, however, and has indeed been called into question by recent investigations. For one thing, one wonders where there is any actual evidence that the pseudepigraphic claims of the apocalypses were transparent fictions. It is striking that the one reader from antiquity who explicitly comments on the matter, Tertullian, insisted that Enoch's pre-diluvian composition (our 1

Enoch) is not invalidated by the fact of the flood: his direct descendant, Noah himself, no doubt could have reproduced the book verbatim after all surviving copies were destroyed by the deluge (*De cultu Fem*. 1, 3, 1).

Apart from the question of ancient "reader response," one needs to take seriously the functions and intentions of the genre itself, and of its pseudepigraphic character in particular. John Collins has repeatedly stressed that the authorial claim of the apocalypses functions precisely to make the *ex eventu* prophecies believable. Readers who knew that Daniel was not really predicting the history of nations up to and following Antiochus Epiphanes would not have found much solace or assurance in his "prophecies." Only if his authorial claim is believed can his predictions about the imminent destruction of Antiochus have any effect. That is to say, since other prophecies (*ex eventu*, as we now know) came true, so too then, obviously, will the ones the reader is most interested in, namely those involving the current oppressor. Likewise for other apocalypses of Daniel's ilk, including those at Qumran.[12]

Karina Martin Hogan takes the matter a step further. While acknowledging that earlier scholars tried to get the ancient pseudonymous authors of the apocalypses off the moral hook (Speyer: "echte religiöse Pseudepigraphie"; Russell "corporate personality"; and so on), Hogan chooses to stress the historical consciousness of Jewish apocalypticists. In her view, pseudonyms were carefully and consciously chosen by the apocalyptic authors because these particular names provided links between the key historical periods with which the apocalypses were concerned. In particular, Noah, Moses, Daniel, Baruch, and Ezra were assigned apocalyptic visions because as traditional figures they bridged distinct historical periods and watershed events: Flood, Exodus, Babylonian Exile, and Restoration. As Hogan concludes about the real authors: "by casting Israel's history in the form of *ex eventu* prophecy, they bring a new perspective of determinism as well as an explicit claim to divine revelation, both of which set them apart from the biblical narratives and histories."[13] Once again, in any event, the authorial claim was conscious, even calculated.

A different angle taken by Michael Stone leads to a similar result.[14] Stone argues that the authority of the Jewish apocalypses did not come merely from the transmundane revelation they narrated, but also from the fact that they were written precisely to be taken as Scripture and were

based, for that reason, on "ancient normative tradition." The claim to represent this tradition was secured by the name of the figure who conveyed the revelation. But that meant the name had to be explained and justified. This is what led to occasional self-conscious discussions of how the books were preserved from hoary antiquity to the present (cf. 1 Enoch 68.1; 81.1–5; 2 Enoch 10, 13, esp. 13.75–78; and so on): "That a need was felt to account for this is revealing. It betrays, by protesting overmuch, the awesome weight of the received scriptural tradition." These authors, in short, "were conscious in large measure of what they were doing, yet did it in dialectic with the received tradition," even if, as Rowland and others have insisted, "part of what they were doing was validated for them by their actual experiential practice." As a result, pseudepigraphic claims were done "partly ingenuously and partly very consciously."[15]

In light of these studies, there seems little reason to place pseudepigraphic apocalypses in a different category from pseudepigraphic prophecies, histories, epistles, and so on. For clear and distinct reasons, a writer claimed to be a figure from the distant past,[16] with the intent of convincing his readers that what he said about himself was true. Otherwise the apocalyptic visions would not "work" as visions.

With the testamentary literature we are dealing with a different phenomenon.[17] Even though the Testaments report the first-person narratives of their respective characters (the Twelve Patriarchs, Moses, Solomon, etc.), they do not claim to be written by these people. Instead, they function like embedded speeches or faux documents in, say, ancient histories, which purport to record the actual words of a key figure but which are, in reality, invented by the orthonymous (or, in the case of the Testaments, anonymous) authors themselves.[18]

In Christian Literature

There is little reason to cite every instance that has come down to us of forgery among the Christians of the first four centuries, as I will be discussing prominent cases throughout the bulk of my study. It is worth observing, however, that criticism was very much alive and well among Christian thinkers of the first four centuries. A bewildering number of writings, including many of those that eventually became part of the New

Testament, were claimed by one Christian critic or another not to have been written by their alleged authors. As some examples: Augustine's Manichaean opponent Faustus argued that the Gospels were not actually written by apostles or companions of the apostles (*Contra Faust*. 32.2). Unnamed "heretics" rejected 1 and 2 Timothy, according to Clement of Alexandria, presumably meaning that they did not agree that Paul wrote them (*Strom*. 2.11). Eusebius indicates that the authorship of James was "disputed" (meaning some rejected it), because "few of the ancients quote it" (*H.E*. 2.23.25; 3.25); so too Jerome indicates that some writers considered the book pseudonymous (*Vir. ill*. 2.2). 2 Peter was doubted (Origen in Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25.11) or rejected (Jerome, *Vir. ill*. 1); Didymus the Blind explicitly claims it was forged.[19] Jude too was "disputed" (meaning some rejected it) according to Eusebius (*H.E*. 2.23.25) and rejected because it quotes Enoch, according to Jerome (*Vir. ill*. 4). "Not all" considered 2 John and 3 John "genuine" according to Origen (Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25). Revelation, as we have seen, was thought by some to be homonymous (thus Dionysius of Alexandria; Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25); others ascribed it to a specific forger, Cerinthus (Gaius according to Eusebius, *H.E*. 3.28). Eusebius appears to reject Clement as the author of 2 Clement (*H.E*. 3.38) and labels Barnabas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Shepherd as νόθα (*H.E*. 3.25). The Gospel of Peter was eventually declared pseudepigraphic by Serapion (*H.E*. 3.25). So too Jerome labeled the Acts of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Judgment of Peter nonauthentic (*Vir. ill*. 1). According to Eusebius, the Prophecies of Barcabbas and Barcoph were in fact invented by Basilides (*H.E*. 4.7.6–7). Paul's letters to the Laodiceans and the Alexandrians were labeled Marcionite forgeries by the Muratorian fragment. We have seen that Epiphanius names a number of Phibionite forgeries in book 26 of his Panarion; elsewhere he rejects Gospels written in the names of James, Matthew, and other disciples as Ebionite productions (book 30). Slightly later Jerome rejects the treatise "On Fate," allegedly by Minucius Felix, and Augustine exposes the letter of Jesus allegedly written to Peter and Paul (Augustine, *De cons. Evang*. 1.10)

Early Christian authors similarly reject a long string of forged letters and documents: Athanasius was apparently the victim of an Arian letter forged in his name (*Apol. ad Const*. 19–21). There was also a forged summons to Augustine allegedly from Victorinus (Aug. *Epist*. 59, 2), a letter of Jerome

suspected by Rufinus (*Adv. Rufin*. 3. 2), and another letter allegedly by Jerome about false translations of Scripture (*Adv. Rufin* 3.25; also 2.24). Jerome himself wonders if a letter of Augustine's is actually his (*Epist*. 102,1). Augustine doubts several books assigned to Pelagius (Aug. *De gest Pelag*. 1.19) and mentions a forgery in the name of Cyprian (*Epist*. 93.38). And a series of interpolations of false teachings amid the statements of Basil make it appear that he held these aberrant views (*Epist*. 129.1; 224.1).

And on and on. This list does not count all the books that scholars today widely accept as pseudepigraphic. Just in terms of the earliest Christian tradition, it is striking, as is often noted, that between Paul and Ignatius there is not a single Christian author who writes in his own name, with the possible exception of the "John" of the Apocalypse (which is homonymous).[20] Every other Gospel, epistle, treatise, or sermon is either forged or anonymous and then falsely attributed. No surprise, then, that K. M. Fischer can label the second half of the first century "the era of New Testament pseudepigraphy."[21]

From these sundry references it is also clear that ancients employed criticism during this early period. Jeremy Duff, in his otherwise helpful study "A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity," is incorrect to claim that there are only six explicit discussions of pseudepigraphy in the first two Christian centuries. He names, as the six, 2 Thess. 2:1–3 (a letter "as if by us"); Dionysius of Corinth, who complains about false teachers interpolating his own writings; Serapion on the Gospel of Peter; Tertullian on the Acts of Paul; Tertullian on the Gospels of Mark and Luke (as actually Gospels of Peter and Paul); and the Muratorian Fragment with its comments on heretical forgeries.[22] Some of these, however, do not concern issues of authorship. Dionysius of Corinth is referring to the falsification of (his own) writings, not to forgery. And Tertullian, as we have seen, condemns the author of the Acts of Paul and Thecla not for forging the account but for fabricating it. Moreover, when Tertullian indicates that Mark and Luke are reasonably considered to represent the views of Peter and Paul (*Adv. Marc*. 4.5.3–4), he is not suggesting that Mark claimed to *be* Peter or that Luke claimed to *be* Paul. These authors (for Tertullian) wrote in their own names, not in the names of their authorizing figures.

On the other hand, there are other authors of the period who did indeed discuss pseudepigraphy, especially in Duff's wider usage of the term.

Hegesippus, for example, maligned heretical forgeries in circulation, as Eusebius tells us: "And in discussing apocryphal books, as they are called, he states that some of them were fabricated by heretics in his own time" (καὶ περὶ τῶν λεγομένων δὲ ἀποκρύφων διαλαμβάνων, ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ χρόνων πρός τινων αἱρετικῶν ἀναπεπλάσθαι τινὰ τούτων ἱστορεῖ; *H.E*. 4, 22, 9). So too Gaius of Rome objected to those who "compose new scriptures" and contended that Paul's letters number thirteen, not accepting Hebrews as Pauline. As Eusebius indicates: "for then as now there were some at Rome who did not think that it was the Apostle's" (*H.E*. 6.20.3). Moreover, Gaius appears to have assigned the authorship of the book of Revelation to Cerinthus, who only falsely claimed to be John (Eusebius *H.E*. 3.28). So too, somewhat later, Dionysius of Alexandria indicates that his "predecessors" had charged that the book of Revelation was forged by Cerinthus in the name of John in order to get a hearing for his views (Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25).

In addition, Irenaeus mentions numerous apocryphal and inauthentic writings by the heretics: "they adduce an untold multitude of apocryphal and spurious writings, which they have composed (πλῆθος ἀποκρύφων καὶ νόθων γραφῶν ἃς αὐτοὶ ἔπλασαν) to bewilder foolish men and such as do not understand the letters of the Truth" (*Adv. Haer*. 1.20.1).[23] Clement of Alexandria, as previously noted, mentions some who reject 1 and 2 Timothy because the former speaks of Gnosis falsely so-called (*Strom*. 2.11). Finally, as we have also seen, Origen was even more forthright than Dionysius of Corinth in complaining about the falsification of his own work.[24]

As a net result, there is certainly no lack of materials from antiquity related to forgery—pagan, Jewish, and Christian. All the odder, as I indicated at the outset, that there are so few studies devoted to the topic. There are to be sure explorations of individual cases in droves,[25] as well as extensive studies of the relationship between pseudepigraphy and canon.[26] And there are articles written on this or that aspect of the broader problem,[27] many of them compiled into valuable collections.[28] But where are the monographs?[29]

FALSE AUTHORIAL CLAIMS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

We have already seen substantial grounds for labeling literary works that make false authorial claims forgeries, for example in the clear instances of intended deceit considered in Chapter Two and in the ancient Greek and Latin terms used to describe the phenomenon, such as ψεῦδος, νόθος,, and κίβδηλος.. Scholars who object to the idea that deceit was involved in the practice typically claim that literary, or intellectual, property is a modern notion without an ancient analogue, so that authors who made false authorial claims were simply engaged in a widely accepted exercise that no one thought the worse of. And so, for example, in his commentary on the pseudepigraphic letter to the Ephesians, Andrew Lincoln declares:

> There is no reason to think of the device of pseudonymity in negative terms and to associate it necessarily with such notions as forgery and deception.… The idea of "Intellectual property," basic to modern discussion of legitimate claims to authorship, plagiarism, and copyright laws, played little or no role in ancient literary production.[30]

On these grounds, Lincoln indicates that literary pseudepigraphy (what I'm calling forgery) "was a widespread and accepted literary practice in both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures."[31] Lincoln is not alone in expressing such opinions.[32]

The careful studies of Speyer, Brox, Grafton, Duff, and Baum, among others, however, have effectively destroyed this position. Ancients certainly did have a sense of intellectual property, and, as we have seen, critics thought and spoke badly of anyone who transgressed acceptable bounds by falsely claiming in writing to be a well-known person.[33] On the contrary, what is a modern invention is the idea that ancient readers widely found false authorial claims acceptable.[34] This was recognized already by one of the pioneers of the modern study of forgery, Frederik Torm, some eighty years ago:

> The situation within Judaism and Christianity resembled that of the Greco-Roman world. *Either* one believed in the authenticity of a pseudonymous document and could then prize it highly, *or* one assumed its inauthenticity, in which case the writing in question

> became suspect already due to its pseudonymity. The notion that in this era pseudonymity was ever treated as a literary form in the religious realm and was indeed recognized as such is a modern invention.…[35]

Chief among the reasons for thinking that ancients were interested in knowing who actually wrote a literary work is what we have already begun to see repeatedly: ancient critics themselves addressing the issue with striking frequency. Speyer cogently speaks of an "extensive body of [ancient] writings, which does not serve any other purpose but to separate out inauthentic works from the literary remains of famous authors by means of philological and historical methods."[36] The ancient evidence is overwhelming. Just to give a fuller sense of the matter, I might mention some isolated instances.

Herodotus provides the first documented instances of Echtheitskritik, already in the fifth century BCE, when, among other things, he questions whether Homer authored the Cypria and the Epigoni epic (2, 116ff. and 4, 32). Ion of Chios, in his *Triagmi*, indicates that Pythagoras ascribed some of his own poems to Orpheus[37]; so too, Aristotle doubted that the Orphic poems were by Orpheus.[38] Extensive comments on authenticity—determining which works were νόθα and which were γνήσια—appear in the Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle, from Ammonius and Simplicius to Elias and David.[39]

After the construction of the great libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum, Echtheitskritik became the task of the grammarians. Thus we learn, for example, from Quintilian:

> For not only is the art of writing combined with that of speaking, but correct reading also precedes illustration, and with all these is joined the exercise of judgment, which the old grammarians, indeed, used with such severity that they not only allowed themselves to distinguish certain verses with a particular mark of censure and to remove, as spurious, certain books which had been inscribed with false titles, from their sets, but even brought some authors within their canon and excluded others altogether from classification.[40]

And so, in the first half of the third century, Callimachus at the Alexandrian Museion categorized books in the library as genuine (γνήσια)„ inauthentic (i.e., forged: νόθα), or debated (ἀμφίβολα, ἀμφιδοξούμενα, ἀμφιβαλλόμενα).[41]

More specifically, in the later first century BCE, Dionysius of Halicarnassus expressed doubts ("Lysias" ch. 12 and "Dinarchus" chs. 2–3) about speeches of Lysias that were widely thought genuine, as we will see more fully later. Aulus Gellius indicates that Lucius Aelius maintained that only 25 of the 130 comedies circulating in the name of Plautus were authentic (*Noct. Attic*. 3.3.11–14). So too, numerous forgeries were in circulation in the name of Democritus: "Many fictions of this kind seem to have been attached to the name of Democritus by ignorant men, who sheltered themselves under his reputation and authority (nobilitatis auctoritatisque eius perfugio utentibus)" (10. 12.8).[42] Plutarch repeatedly speaks of his doubts concerning the genuineness of letters (*Brutus* 53, 7; *Lysand*. 14, 4). So too Pausanias on occasion, as when he expresses some mild doubt over the Hesiodic authorship of the *Theogony* (e.g., 9.27.2: "Hesiod, or the one who wrote the *Theogony* fathered on Hesiod"). Arguably the most famous critic of all was Galen, who took on the entire Hippocratic corpus, in part precisely to decide what was authentic and what not.[43] And we have already considered Diogenes Laertius and comments from the second book of his ten-volume work. Isolated other comments include his statement that the *Nautical Astronomy* attributed to Thales (εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένη) is said by others to be the work of Phocus of Samos (*Lives*, 1.23); that among the writings of Glaucon some thirty-two are to be considered spurious (οἳ νοθεύονται; 2.124); that the lecture notes of Strato "are doubted" (5.60); that some attribute Phlegon's play *Philosophers* to Poseidippus (7.27); and that a verse of Empedocles is perhaps to be assigned instead to Simonides (8.65). And on and on.

This listing of Greek and Roman sources intent on uncovering forgeries is not meant to be exhaustive. It is merely intended to illustrate a historical reality: ancient authors who mention pseudepigrapha do so because they are invested in knowing who really wrote the books produced in the name of known figures. Intellectuals were widely concerned to know whether a book's reputed author was its real author.

As we have already seen in part, there was an extensive discourse about authenticity in the early church as well, all of it implying a concern over

what we might call literary property. To the discussions already cited, I might mention an expression of dismay over "heretical" forgeries from Ambrosiaster, who laments that just as the Devil sometimes assumes the guise of the redeemer in order to deceive believers, so too heretics write in the names of the sacred authors.[44] Ambrosiaster does not say here what he might think about forgers of his own theological persuasion; but there is no doubt what he thought of forgers with whom he disagreed. This naturally raises the broader question of the attitudes that ancient critics, especially Christians, had about the phenomenon of forgery.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT FORGERY

If there were no concept of intellectual property in antiquity, it would be virtually impossible to explain not only why plagiarists were condemned and sometimes punished, but also why authors complained about forgeries being produced in their own names. With his customary humor and bite, for example, Martial objects to forgers who produced poems, claiming to be him:

> My page has not wounded even those it justly hates, and fame won with another's blush is not dear to me! What does this avail me when certain folk would pass off as mine darts wet with the blood of Lycambes, and under my name a man vomits his viperous venom who owns he cannot bear the light of day? (*Epigrams*, 7.12)
>
> If some malignant fellow claim as mine poems that are steeped in black venom, do you lend me a patron's voice, and with all your strength and without stopping shout: "My Martial did not write that"? (7.72)[45]

The best-known instance of complaint comes from Galen, a century later. In one of his many autobiographical accounts, he indicates that when passing by a bookseller in the Sandalarium he overheard an argument between a man who had just purchased a book with the title "Galen the Physician" and a trained amateur scholar, who read two lines and proclaimed "This is not Galen's language—the title is false."[46] Galen's own reaction was to write *De libris propriis*, the book about his books. Here he was straightforward

about his goals: to allow those without the requisite grammatical and rhetoric training to know which books were actually his. And he certainly had a lot to be concerned about. By one modern account, some 13 percent of the surviving Galenic texts are forgeries.[47]

Among other things, these instances from Martial and Galen immediately give the lie to those New Testament scholars who claim that forgeries in the name of Paul, or Peter, or any other apostle, necessarily come from after their lifetimes, since no one would have dared forge a writing in the name of a person still living. Interestingly, this claim is often made by more conservative biblical scholars, who, ironically enough, tend to hold to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians, a book in which "Paul" objects to a forgery circulating in his own name among the Thessalonians (2:2).

And "Paul" was not the only Christian who was both aware of and incensed by forgeries in his own name. We have already seen an analogous situation with Origen from a century and a half later.[48] A century still farther on we have the account of Athanasius, irate over a letter forged in his name by a theological opponent:

> I am sure you will be astonished at the presumption of my enemies. Montanus, the officer of the Palace, came and brought me a letter, which purported to be an answer to one from me.… But here again I am astonished at those who have spoken falsehood in your ears, that they were not afraid, seeing that lying belongs to the Devil, and that liars are alien from Him who says, "I am the Truth." For I never wrote to you, nor will my accuser be able to find any such letter.[49]

Forged letters became a real and widespread problem in the highly charged polemical environment of the Christian community at the end of the fourth Christian century and into the fifth. And so we have the complaint of Jerome:

> My brother Eusebius writes to me that, when he was at a meeting of African bishops which had been called for certain ecclesiastical affairs, he found there a letter purporting to be written by me, in

> which I professed penitence and confessed that it was through the influence of the press in my youth that I had been led to turn the Scriptures into Latin from the Hebrew; in all of which there is not a word of truth.

That he was not the author of the letter should have been obvious from the style; in any event, Jerome considers himself fortunate, tongue in cheek, for not being "self-accused" by the forger of truly criminal activity.

> It was impossible for him, accomplished as he was, to copy any style and manner of writing, whatever their value may be; amidst all his tricks and his fraudulent assumption of another man's personality, it was evident who he was.… I wonder that in this letter he did not make me out as guilty of homicide, or adultery or sacrilege or parricide or any of the vile things which the silent working of the mind can revolve within itself. Indeed I ought to be grateful to him for having imputed to me no more than one act of error or false dealing out of the whole forest of possible crimes. (*Adv. Ruf*. 2.24)[50]

In another place Jerome himself is falsely accused by Rufinus of forging a letter in the name of Pope Anastasius, a letter that, as it turns out, was genuine (*Adv. Ruf*. 3, 20). Elsewhere Rufinus feels that he has been unjustly accused of forging a letter in Jerome's name to a group of African bishops (Jerome, *Adv. Ruf*. 3, 25). Again, Jerome writes Augustine to ask if the letter he has received is actually by him (*Epist*. 102.1). As we have already seen, Augustine too exposed a forgery of a letter allegedly by Victorinus summoning him to a council meeting.[51]

It should not be objected that the forging of letters is generically different from the forging of literary works. Generic differences do matter. But many of the early Christian forgeries we will be examining—including those found in the New Testament—are precisely letters.

REACTIONS TO VIOLATORS CAUGHT IN THE ACT

There was no legislation in Greece and Rome to protect literary property rights, just as there was no legislation for all sorts of scandalous and socially unacceptable activities. Still, to that extent, forgery in antiquity is different from today, when forgers can be punished by law. At the same time, there is no doubt, as we have seen, that by the early Christian centuries there had long been a sense of intellectual property among ancient authors. Another indication is that ancient falsifiers of texts, fabricators of accounts, and forgers of literary works were regularly condemned, chastised, and sometimes even physically punished for their troubles.

In our first surviving account of Echtheitskritik, Herodotus tells us that Onomacritus was not only caught in the act of falsifying oracles but was severely punished for it by being banished from Athens.[52] This was not merely the peculiar whim of the local despot. Onomacritus and others like him who altered the oracular texts were open to widespread aspersion, as attested still many centuries later by Plutarch: "I forbear to mention how much blame men like Onomacritus, Prodicus, and Cinaethon have brought upon themselves from the oracles by foisting upon them a tragic diction and a grandiloquence of which they have had no need, nor have I any kindly feeling toward their changes" (*Oracles at Delphi* 407B).[53]

In a similar vein, the Stoic Athenodorus was relieved of his duties in the great library of Pergamum because he altered the texts of Zeno.[54] In Christian circles, as we have seen, Tertullian tells us of the presbyter of Asia Minor who resigned (by force?) his ecclesiastical office on being implicated in the fabrication of the Acts of Paul and Thecla (*De baptismo*, 17). In other instances, falsifiers and fabricators were simply maligned for their literary handiwork, as when Dionysius of Corinth leveled bitter complaints against those who heretically altered his writings,[55] or when Celsus castigated Christians for inventing Sibylline oracles that placed predictions of the coming of Christ on the lips of the ancient pagan prophetess.[56]

Much the same kinds of reaction are attested for those caught making false authorial claims. We have seen already the castigations of Martial on the pagan side and Origen on the Christian, leveled against brash authors who forged writings in their names.[57] Sometimes forgers were called to account, as when the fifth-century ecclesiastic Salvian was caught by his own bishop forging a writing in the name of Paul's companion Timothy. As

we will see, Salvian wrote a self-serving justification in his own defense. For now it is enough to note that his bishop, Salonius, was not at all amused when he discovered that his former colleague and current underling had tried to promote his own views in the name of an authority who had been dead for four hundred years. That Salonius was upset and incensed is clear; how he reacted to Salvian's self-defense we will never know. We learn of the incident only from Salvian himself.[58]

In other instances we learn of real punishments for forgery. The philosopher Diotimus was caught having forged fifty obscene letters in the name of Epicurus. According to Athenaeus (*Banqueters* 13.611B), who names as his source Demetrius of Magnesia (the "Homonyms"), an Epicurean philosopher named Zeno tracked Diotimus down and murdered him. Forging could be serious business. This much we can learn from a Jewish source, Josephus, who indicates that a royal servant in the court of King Herod forged a letter in the name of Alexander that discussed his plan to murder his father Herod. The forger, a certain "Diophantus, a secretary of the king, an audacious fellow, who had the clever knack of imitating any handwriting [δεινὸς μιμήσασθαι πάσης χειρὸς γράμματα]; and who, after numerous forgeries, was eventually put to death for a crime of that nature."[59]

There are not many testimonials from antiquity about persons caught in the act of falsifying, fabricating, and forging documents. But every instance that we do have points in the same direction. These were not acceptable practices. On the contrary, they were condemned, maligned, castigated, and attacked. In the realm of polemical discourse and political realia, in particular, they were matters of real moment—sometimes, though rarely, of course, matters of life and death.

AUTHORS AS AUTHORITIES

We have seen that ancient attitudes toward the violation of intellectual property claims are relatively clear just from the vocabulary used to describe it. The terms used for plagiarism ("thievery," "robbery") and forgery ("lies," "adulterations," "bastards"), for example, were obviously harsh. Moreover, we have observed a keen interest in and serious intellectual energy devoted to establishing writings as authentic or spurious.

Those who were found guilty of literary malfeasance were objects of derogation, if not worse.

In the rarified realm of literary criticism, deprecating comments were often simply off the cuff, as when Seneca the Elder, speaking of the works of the great rhetoricians, says, "In general there are no extant drafts from the pens of the greatest declaimers, or what is worse, there are forged ones (quod peius est, falsi)."[60] Still, critics wanted to know who said what, and they cast aspersions on the anonymous authors who claimed to be someone else. Thus, for example, Porphyry, in his *Life of Plotinus*, speaks of a book allegedly written by Zostrianus: "I myself have shown on many counts that the Zoroastrian volume is spurious and modern, concocted by the sectaries in order to pretend that the doctrines they had embraced were those of the ancient sage."[61]

For Seneca, Porphyry, and other ancient critics, one of the key reasons for wanting to know whether or not a writing was genuine (γνήσιον) was a widely shared cultural assumption that a symbiotic relationship existed between the author of a writing and its authority. That is to say, critics were not concerned about either the author or the contents of a writing in isolation from one another, but in tandem. The person of the author provided the authority for the account; at the same time, the contents of the account established the identity of the author. This symbiotic relationship was fully appreciated by early Christian critics and is a key to understanding their attitudes toward forged writings.

To some extent, the early Christian intellectuals, like their non-Christian counterparts, were interested on general grounds in knowing who the authors of various texts really were. And so, for example, Clement of Alexandria, one of the earliest of the trained Christian critics, both borrowed and mirrored the critical stances of his pagan contemporaries:

> It is said that the oracles attributed to Musaeus were composed by Onomacritus, Orpheus' *Mixing-Bowl* by Zopyrus of Heraclea, the *Descent to Hades* by Prodicus of Samos. Ion of Chios in his *Triads* records that Pythagoras attributed some of his work to Orpheus. Epigenes in his work *On Poetry Attributed to Orpheus* says that the *Descent to Hades* and the *Sacred Doctrine* are works of the

> Pythagorean Cercops and the *Robe* and the *Works of Nature*, writings of Brontinus.[62]

So too Tertullian, from the passage already mentioned: perplexed by the existence of the book of Enoch, Tertullian develops a lengthy argument to show that even if all the copies of the book had been destroyed by the flood in Noah's day, Noah himself, as Enoch's descendant, would have remembered his teachings handed down through the family line and so would have been able to reconstruct them, either of his own natural abilities or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In either case, the book of Enoch extant today really is the book written by the antediluvian Enoch (*De cultu Fem*. 1.3.1).

Or there is Augustine dealing with the books of the Hippocratic corpus:

> But even in worldly writings there were well-known authors under whose names many works were produced later, and they were repudiated either because they did not agree with the writings that were certainly theirs or because, at the time when those authors wrote, these writings did not merit to be recognized and to be handed on and commended to posterity by them or their friends. Not to mention others, were not certain books that were produced under the name Hippocrates, the highly renowned physician, rejected as authoritative by physicians? Nor did a certain similarity of topics and language offer them any help. For, compared to the books that it was clear were really Hippocrates' books, they were judged inferior, and they were not known at the same time at which the rest of his writings were recognized as truly his.[63]

This widespread desire to find the actual, not just the reputed, author of a text puts a question mark beside the recent claim of Armin Baum that ancient critics did not consider a work forged so long as the contents could be thought to go back to the alleged author, whether or not he actually produced the book. In Baum's view, it did not matter so much whether the alleged author actually wrote the words; what mattered is whether the contents of the work could be traced back to the views of the alleged author. If so, ancient critics did not consider the book to be forged.[64]

Baum's detailed and learned study is useful in many ways, but this overarching thesis is problematic for a number of reasons.[65] It is true that the content of a book mattered to critics, and that it was one of the chief criteria used to establish claims of authorship. But there were other grounds as well, as we have already begun to see; moreover, these other grounds were employed precisely because ancient critics were genuinely interested in the historical question of who actually put pen to papyrus.

Before pursuing this particular issue further, it might be worthwhile pointing out a broader problem with Baum's line of argumentation, the inconvenient fact that numerous authors and groups of readers, holding wildly disparate philosophical or religious views, could claim that the contents of a particular text really were, or were not, those of the alleged author. In most instances there was no way then, and scarcely any way now, of adjudicating these claims. This will be an enormous issue once we come to the Christian materials in the following chapters. Various followers of Paul took contrary lines on such fundamental issues as the unity of the godhead, the nature of Christ, the viability of marriage and sexual relations, and so on. Some among these followers produced writings in Paul's name, all claiming that Paul himself authorized their views. The reality is that he authorized none of them. Baum's view may be theologically satisfying: apostolic pseudepigrapha can be accepted as apostolic, even if apostles did not write them, and no charge of forgery need be leveled against their pseudonymous authors. But the view is very hard to establish historically, given the nature of our evidence and our ability to trace multiple lines of thought back to apostles (e.g., that women can be active in the worship of the church or that they have to be passive and submissive instead—both views are "Pauline").

That is to say, pseudonymous texts supporting divergent views, on Baum's assessment, would theoretically all have to be seen, historically, as nonproblematic in their authorial claims. But the ancients did not see it that way. If a book did not support the "correct" interpretation of Paul, then it could not be by Paul. And then it was labeled a lie, a deceit, and a bastard. The correct interpretation, however, was generally established not on historical-critical but on theological grounds. If a text agreed with the interpreter's own understanding of Paul, then it could be accepted as genuinely Pauline; if not, then it was forged.

Moreover, as I have begun to emphasize, in many instances in antiquity, critics both Christian and non-Christian were interested in the simple historical question of whether the alleged author of a work was its real author. This decision was not based purely on the question of the contents of a work, but on other grounds as well. Take the famous words of Origen on the authorship of Hebrews:

> If I were asked my personal opinion, I would say that the matter is the Apostle's but the phraseology and construction are those of someone who remembered the Apostle's teaching and wrote his own interpretation of what his master had said. So if any church regards this epistle as Paul's, it should be commended for so doing, for the primitive Church had every justification for handing it down as his. Who wrote the epistle is known to God alone: the accounts that have reached us suggest that it was either Clement, who became Bishop of Rome, or Luke, who wrote the gospel and the Acts. (Quoted in Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25.11–14)

Origen's attitude may seem to justify Baum's view that only the contents mattered in establishing "genuine" authorship. But in fact it does not. Even though Origen agrees that the contents of the letter to the Hebrews are Pauline, he refuses to call it Pauline (even though he understands why others would want to do so). In other words, he refuses to do precisely what Baum's view suggests he should have done: accept the Pauline authorship of the book because of the Pauline contents. For Origen—at least in his one explicit discussion of the matter—the contents are not enough. He will not say a book is by Paul unless Paul actually wrote it.[66]

So too Origen's contemporary Dionysius of Alexandria, who was heavily invested in knowing who actually wrote the book Revelation. On the basis of a *stylistic* analysis, he shows that it could not have been John, the apostle and author of the Fourth Gospel and the book we now call 1 John. He concludes that it was instead produced by a holy and inspired man of the same name writing at the same time (Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25.7).

Eusebius too was interested in knowing the actual authors of the early Christian writings. As one of his leading criteria he, the inveterate historian, looked to see how widely a book was used and attested by earlier authors.

Writings that appear to have been unknown in earlier times were suspect, not just with respect to their canonicity but more specifically with respect to their authorship, two issues that were closely tied together (but by no means synonymous) in Eusebius' mind. Usage, though, was as important as content.

And so, for example, he has this to say about the epistles of James and Jude:

> Such is the story of James, to whom is attributed the first of the "general" epistles. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted, since few early writers refer to it (ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν, οὐ πολλοὶ γοῦν τῶν παλαιῶν αὐτῆς ἐμνημόνευσαν), any more than to "Jude's," which is also one of the seven called general. (*H.E.* 2.23.25)

At stake here is not merely whether these books should be included in the canon, but also the fundamental issue that makes the canonical decision possible: Are these books genuinely by the ascribed authors? Or are they νόθα? On balance, Eusebius thinks the former. He engages in much the same line of argument with respect to the writings ascribed to Peter (*H.E.* 3.3.1–4). 1 Peter is genuine, because it is quoted widely; 2 Peter is not to be seen as canonical, even though some Christian leaders find it valuable. Other books such as the Acts of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter are to be rejected because they were not used in earlier times or in orthodox circles, to Eusebius' knowledge (*H.E.* 3.3.2). Again it may appear that Eusebius is concerned here only with issues of canon, but in fact the question of canon for him is closely tied to the more precise question of authenticity: a book not actually written by Peter and not widely accepted as being written by Peter is not to be included among the canonical writings of Peter. This is clear from the conclusion of his discussion: "These then are the works attributed to Peter, of which I have recognized only one epistle as authentic and accepted by the early fathers" (ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ὀνομαζόμενα Πέτρου, ὧν μόνην μίαν γνησίαν ἔγνων ἐπιστολὴν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς πάλαι πρεσβυτέροις ὡμολογημένην, τοσαῦτα. Note: γνησίαν [3.3.4]). That the issue for Eusebius was not merely canonicity but also authorship in se is seen by the circumstance that he applies the same

kinds of criteria—especially lineage of usage (not contents)—in discussing works that he clearly did not consider canonical, such as 2 Clement (*H.E.* 3.38.4). If the book does not have an established lineage of usage from Clement's day, it is not to be attributed to Clement, independently of the question (Baum's) of whether the contents are Clementine.

Much the same could be said about Jerome, who determines that the letter to Jude is to be included among the Catholic epistles, but points out that it is rejected by other Christian critics because it quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch (and surely no inspired author would quote as authoritative an apocryphal book!) (*Vir. ill.* 4). Here, as in Eusebius, the authority of the book resides in the actual author. In this instance the authenticity of the book is determined on the basis of its contents. This is not a case that supports Baum's perspective, however; for here the contents render a negative judgment (what is found in the book indicates that Jude could not have written it), not a positive one (the book is rightly attributed to Jude because the contents—apart from the wording and style—*do* go back to him). Moreover, Jerome, like Eusebius, is interested in the matter of authorship itself, that is, in who actually produced a book that goes under the name of a well-known person (and not simply on the grounds of contents).[67] Thus, for example, he argues that the work *De fato* ascribed to Minucius Felix is not actually by him, not because of its contents but because of its writing style: "although the work of a very learned man, [it] does not seem to me to correspond in style with the work mentioned above" (*Vir. ill.* 58). So too Theophilus, the sixth bishop of Antioch, composed many surviving genuine accounts, but the two books "On the Gospel" and "On the Proverbs of Solomon" are not authentic, because they "do not appear to me to correspond in style and language with the elegance and expressiveness of the above works" (*Vir. ill.* 25).[68]

And so there are two points that need to be stressed with respect to Christian approaches to forgery. On one hand, contrary to Baum, it was not simply the contents of a work that mattered; Christian critics were invested in knowing who actually wrote a work, on the basis of content, style, and established patterns of usage. On the other hand, this question of authorship did stand in a clear but ironically symbiotic relationship with the contents of a work. It was the contents that, in part (but only in part), helped determine whether an author actually wrote the book circulating under his name; but it

was precisely the fact that he wrote the book that provided the authority for its contents.

Nowhere can this paradoxical situation be seen more clearly than in the famous incident of Serapion and the Gospel of Peter. Eusebius later narrates the event, from his first-hand knowledge of Serapion's autobiographical account, which is only partially quoted for us in the *Ecclesiastical History* (*H.E.* 6.12). Upon visiting the Christian community in the village of Rhossus, Serapion initially approved of their use of the Gospel of Peter, reasoning that if Peter had written a Gospel, it was obviously acceptable for liturgical use. Only after returning to Antioch did Serapion learn that the book had heretical tendencies. Procuring a copy for himself, he came to see that whereas most of it was perfectly acceptable, parts were definitely susceptible of a docetic reading. It was precisely on these grounds that he forbade the further use of the book and appears to have referred to it as the "so-called" Gospel of Peter (τοῦ λεγομένου κατὰ Πέτρον εὐαγγελίου).

Here then is our symbiosis between literary author and authoritative literature: the Gospel would be authoritative had it been written by Peter; but the possibly heretical contents show that it could not have been written by Peter. And so the book is not authoritative. Eusebius himself adopts a similar line of thought, as when he attacks heretical forgeries in the names of the apostles Peter, Thomas, and Matthias, which "do not have the apostolic character" (ὁ τῆς φράσεως παρὰ τὸ ἦθος τὸ ἀποστολικὸν ἐναλλάττει χαρακτήρ; *H.E.* 3.25.6–7) "while the ideas and implication of their contents are so irreconcilable with true orthodoxy that they stand revealed as the forgeries of heretics." Both the style and contents are non-apostolic, and so they lack apostolic authority.

This understanding of the symbiotic relationship between authorial claims and authoritative contents did not originate with Eusebius, or with Serapion before him. It goes all the way back in the proto-orthodox heresiological tradition. Irenaeus, for example, attacks heretics for forging books in the names of others to lead their followers astray: "Besides those passages, they adduce an untold multitude of apocryphal and spurious writings [inenarrabilem multitudinem apocryphorum et perperum scripturarum, quas ipsi finxerunt], which they have composed to bewilder foolish men and such as do not understand the letters of the Truth" (*Adv. Haer.* 1.20.1).[69]

So too Tertullian: the fourfold Gospel of the orthodox is superior to the forgeries of Marcion—the heretic's creations are later in date than the apostolic writings and so must be seen as corruptions of an older truth (*Adv. Marc*. 4.5). And his contemporary, the author of the Muratorian Fragment, who rejects the letters to the Alexandrians and to the Laodiceans on the basis of their contents: they contain Marcionite teachings, were therefore not originally written by Paul, and so cannot be accepted as authoritative.[70]

The same view can be seen at the end of our period of concern, or just after, for example in the works of Augustine. Augustine uses a strictly historical argument in order to show that the theurgic letter allegedly written by Jesus to his disciples Peter and Paul could not be authentic: Paul was not one of Jesus' earthly followers. The forger of the letter must have been misled by seeing a Christian painting of the two apostles with Jesus and assumed then that the three were companions during Jesus' earthly life. Since they were not, Jesus would not have written to the two of them:

> How, then, is it possible that Christ could have written those books which they wish to have it believed that He did write before His death, and which were addressed to Peter and Paul, as those among His disciples who had been most intimate with Him, seeing that up to that date Paul had not yet become a disciple of His at all? (*De cons. evang*. 1.10)[71]

As a result, the letter and the magical practices it supports were forged. In consequence, they have no authority. The authority of the writing resides in its authorship; and authorship is decided, at least in part, by the writing's contents. It is a two-way street.

As I pointed out earlier, however, this two-way street presented a problem to the early Christian critics, since it was a path accessible to just about anyone. No one saw that more clearly than Augustine himself, who protested against his Manichaean opponent Faustus: "Sinfulness has made you so deaf to the testimonies of the scriptures that you dare to say that whatever is brought forth from them against you was not said by the apostle but was written by some interpolator or other under his name" (*Contra Faust*. 33.6). Since authority resided in authorship, the easiest way to deny authority was to reject authorship. It is precisely this conundrum that made

the literary and historical critical endeavors of the early Christian critics so vitally important. These faithful intelligentsia were not simply engaged in antiquarian endeavors when deciding which works were justifiably attributed to their alleged authors. This was theological discourse of the highest order, since authority resided in authorship. And so the contents of a work mattered insofar as they were genuinely penned by an authoritative figure. If the authorial claims were false, however, the text lost all claim to authority. Establishing the credibility of authorial claims was, as a result, central to the entire theological enterprise. It really did matter who wrote what.

1. None more so than Wolfgang Speyer and Norbert Brox, but including such recent scholars as Margaret Janssen and Armin Baum. See note 27 below.

2. Xenophon appears to have published a book of Thucydides claiming it was his own (depending on how one reads the text; 2.57), and Aeschines, a follower of Socrates, published work he had received from Socrates' wife Xanthippe as if it were his own (2.60).

3. For a relatively succinct summary and discussion, see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 150–68.

4. Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of 'The Bible' in Late Antiquity," in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 478.

5. See Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, "The Reliability of Josephus Flavius: The Case of Hecataeus' and Manetho's Accounts of Jews and Judaism: Fifteen Years of Contemporary Research (1974–1990)," *JSJ* 24 (1993): 215–34. For the famous but disputed letter of Judah Maccabee in 2 Maccabees, see Ben Zion Wacholder, "The Letter from Judah Maccabee to Aristobulus: Is 2 Maccabees 1:10b-2:18 Authentic?" *HUCA* 49 (1978): 89–133.

6. This is another case of non-pseudepigraphic forgery: the author does not say that his name is Solomon, but he claims to be a Jewish king who built a temple, and he describes events from Solomon's lifetime. The Muratorian fragment famously assigns the book to Solomon's friends—without denying that it implicitly claims instead to be by Solomon himself—but accepts it as canonical. Its authorship was doubted throughout the early church, for example by Origen in his *Commentary on John* 8, 37

(20.4.26); Jerome, *In libros Salom*. Praef; and Augustine (*Doctr. Christ*. 2, 8): "For two books, one called Wisdom and the other Ecclesiasticus, are ascribed to Solomon from a certain resemblance of style, but the most likely opinion is that they were written by Jesus the son of Sirach."

7. Among the extensive works of scholarship, see especially the full study of Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

8. See especially Martin Hengel, "Anonimität, Pseudepigraphie und Literarische Fälschung in der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Literatur," in *Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. Kurt von Fritz (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1972), pp. 231–308; Morton Smith, "Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Tradition," also in *Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. von Fritz, pp. 189–215; and Eibert Tigchelaar, "Forms of Pseudepigraphy in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 85–101.

9. London: SCM, 1964.

0. Thus Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), who argues, among other things, that "a distinctively Jewish interpretation of pseudonymity is difficult to uphold," p. 66.

1. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, pp. 5–7.

2. See, for example, John Collins, "Pseudepigraphy and Group Formation in Second Temple Judaism," in Esther G. Chazon and Michael Stone, eds., *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 43–58.

3. "Pseudepigraphy and the Periodization of History in Jewish Apocalypses," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 61–83; quotation p. 82.

4. "Pseudepigraphy Reconsidered," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 9 (2006): 1–15.

5. Ibid., pp. 12–13.

6. Except for such works as Revelation and the Shepherd, which were not forged.

7. See J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 773–995.

8. As Anthea Portier-Young has pointed out to me, there is a possible exception with the Testament of Moses, in which Moses instructs Joshua to write down his words and deposit them in earthenware jars for safekeeping. Presumably the Testament itself is to be a replication of these words. See *TMoses*, 1.14–18.
9. "In epistolam S. Petri Secundam Enn.," *PG* 39 1774A.
0. 1 Clement may be seen as exceptional as well, in that it claims to be written by a group in Rome, and may well have been, by at least someone there. But since no authorial name is attached, it is perhaps best seen as anonymous.
1. "Die Zeit der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie." "Anmerkungen zur Pseudepigraphie im Neuen Testament," *NTS* 23 (1967): 76.
2. Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 1998, pp. 213–37.
3. *Against Heresies—Book I*, trans. John J. Dillon (ACW; New York: Newman Press, 1992).
4. See p. 64.
5. As will be abundantly clear in the chapters that follow.
6. Thus, e.g., Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon;* Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, The New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004); and most helpfully Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung*.
7. See the bibliography. I would include under this rubric, as some of the most useful contributions: J. S. Candlish, "On the Moral Character of Pseudonymous Books," *Expositor* 4 (1891): 91–107; 262–79; Alfred Gudeman, "Literary Frauds Among the Greeks," in *Classical Studies in Honor of Henry Drisler* (New York: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 52–74; idem, "Literary Frauds Among the Romans," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 25 (1894): 140–64; Arnold Meyer, "Religiöse Pseudepigraphie als ethisch-psychologisches Problem," *ZNW* 35 (1936): 262–79; earlier in *Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie* 86 (1932): 171–90; Frederik Torm, "Die Psychologie der Pseudonymität im Hinblick auf die Literatur des Urchristentums," *Studien der Luther Akademie*, Heft 2 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1932), pp. 7–55; Gustav Bardy, "Faux et fraudes littéraires dans l'antiquité chrétienne," *RHE* 32 (1936): 5–23; 275–302; Kurt Aland, "The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian

Literature of the First Two Centuries," *JTS* 12 (1961): 39–49; Wolfgang Speyer, "Religiöse Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im Altertum," *JAC* 8/9 (1965–66): 88–125; H. R. Balz, "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum," *ZTK* 66 (1969): 403–36; Martin Hengel, "Anonimität, Pseudepigraphie und 'Literarische Fälschung' in der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Literatur," in *Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. Kurt von Fritz (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1971), pp. 231–308; Morton Smith, "Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Tradition," *in Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. Kurt von Fritz, pp. 189–215; Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL* 91 (1972): 3–24; M. Rist, "Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians," in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of A. P. Wikgren*; *Novum Testamentum Supplement*, ed. David Edward Aune (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), pp. 75–91; Franz Laub, "Falsche Verfasserangaben in neutestamentlichen Schriften: Aspekte der gegenwärtigen Diskussion um die neutestamentliche Pseudepigraphie," *TTZ* 89 (1980): 228–41; Pokorny, P. "Das theologische Problem der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie," *EvT* 44 (1984): 486–96; E. J. Bickerman, "Faux littéraires dans l'antiquité classique en marge d'un livre récent," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986); Jean-Daniel Kaestli, "Memoire et pseudepigraphie dans le christianisme," *RTP* 125 (1993): 41–63; Pier Franco Beatrice, "Forgery, Propaganda and Power in Christian Antiquity," *JAC.E* 33 (2002): 39–51; Michael E. Stone, "Pseudepigraphy Reconsidered," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 9 (2006): 1–15; Martina Janssen, "Antike (Selbst) Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 125–79. See, in fact, all the essays, many of them lengthy, in the last-named volume.

8. E.g., Norbert Brox, ed., *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977); and especially Martina Janssen, ed., *Unter falschem Namen: Eine kritische Forschungsbilanz frühchristlicher Pseudepigraphie* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003). See also Herzer, Janssen and Rothschild, eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*.
9. E.g., on much broader issues: Archer Taylor and Fredric John Mosher, *The Bibliographical History of Anonyma and Pseudonyma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); and Edmund Kerchever Chambers, *The*

History and Motives of Literary Forgeries, Burt Franklin Research & Source Works Series 508 (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1891; Repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1970). Those dealing with pagan and early Christian materials in particular, in addition to Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung:* Josef A. Sint, *Pseudonymität im Altertum: Ihre Formen und ihre Gründe* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1960); Norbert Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben: zur Erklärung der frühchristlichen Pseudepigraphie* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 79; Stuttgart: KBW, 1975); and Jeremy N. Duff, "A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 1998).

0. *Ephesians*. WBC, 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. lxxi.
1. Ibid., p. lxx.
2. See further the discussion on pp. 128–32 below. A harsh opponent of these views, Armin Baum *(Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung*, p. 22) cites as examples of denying an ancient notion of literary property: F. Schmidt ("to some extent") in "'Traqué comme un loup.' A propos du débat actuel sur l'apocalyptique juive," *ASSR* 27 (1982): pp. 9–11; M. Casey, *Is John's Gospel True?* (London: Rout-ledge, 1996), pp. 140–77, esp. p. 143, for the Jewish world; K.–H. Ohlig, *Die Theologische Begründung des neutestamentlichen Kanons in der alten Kirche*. KBANT (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1972) p. 91, for the early Christians.
3. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 112–28; Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 62–80; Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, pp. 3–35; Duff, "Reconsideration," pp. 99–137; Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 21–24 and passim.
4. As a side note: if intellectual property had been unknown, plagiarism would not have been an issue. As we have seen, it was a very serious issue indeed among ancient authors.
5. Es verhielt sich innerhalb des Judentums und des Christentums wie in der griechisch-römischen Welt. Entweder glaubte man an die Echtheit einer pseudonymen Schrift und konnte sie dann sehr hochschätzen, oder man nahm die Unechtheit an, und dann war die betreffende Schrift schon wegen ihrer Pseudonymität jedenfalls etwas anrüchig. Daß man in jener Zeit jemals auf religiösem Gebiet die Pseudonymität als eine literarische Form aufgefasst und ihre Berechtigung geradezu anerkannt hat, ist eine moderne Erfindung.… Torm, "Die Psychologie," reprinted in Brox, *Pseudepigraphie in ... Antike*, p. 119. Emphasis his.

6. "… ein umfangreicheres Schrifttum … das keinen anderen Zweck verfolgte, als nach philologisch-historischer Methode die unechten Werke aus dem Nachlaß berühmter Schriftsteller auszusondern." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 113.
7. According to Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8, 8.
8. Thus Johannes Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's 'De Anima'* 1, 5.
9. See Carl Werner Müller, "Die neuplatonischen Aristoteleskommentatoren über die Ursachen der Pseudepigraphie," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, NF 112 (1969): 120–26; reprinted in Brox, *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike*, pp. 264–71.
0. Inst. Or. 1, 4, 3. Translation of John Selby Watson at http://honeyl.public.iastate.edu/quintilian/.
1. Thus Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 23, referencing Blum, *Kallimachos und die Literaturverzeichnung bei den Griechen* (Frankfurt: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1977), 27–244; Y. L. Too, *The Idea of Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 115–50, esp. 126–34; and R. M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993), pp. 15–32. On the work of the Alexandrians' editing practices, see Franco Montanari, "Zenodotus, Aristarchus and the Ekdosis of Homer," in *Editing Texts*, ed. Glenn W. Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 1–21.
2. Translation of J. C. Rolfe in the 1927 LCL edition.
3. See L. O. Bröcker, "Die Methoden Galens in der literarischen Kritik," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 40 (1885): 415–38. This is a learned classic, a careful exposition of the ways Galen engages in "criticism" in all its respects: lower criticism (textual); middle criticism (the detection of interpolations in authentic texts); negative higher criticism (establishing nonauthentic works, which Galen calls νόθα); and positive higher criticism (establishing authenticity of disputed works; Galen calls the authentic works γνήσια).
4. *Ad Thess. Sec*. 2, 4, 1 (CSEL 81, 3, 239).
5. Translation of Walter C. A. Ker, *Martial: Epigrams* LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968).
6. Translation of P. N. Singer, *Galen: Selected Works* (Oxford: University Press, 1997), p. 3.

7. See Ronald F. Kotrc and K. R. Walters, "A Bibliography of the Galenic Corpus," *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* Series 5. 1 (1979): 256–304.
8. See p. 64.
9. *Apol. Ad Const*. 19; translation of Archibald Robinson in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 4.
0. Translation of W. H. Fremantle in *NPNF*, 2nd series, vol. 3.
1. Augustine, *Epist* 59, 1, 2.
2. See p. 61.
3. Translation of Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).
4. See p. 62.
5. See p. 63.
6. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.56. See pp. 508–19.
7. See pp. 81 and 64.
8. See pp. 94–96.
9. *Jewish War*, 1. 26. 3; translation of Thackeray as taken from Henry Leeming, *Josephus' Jewish War and Its Slavonic Version: A Synoptic Comparison of the English Translation by H. St. J. Thackeray with the Critical Edition by N.A. Meščerskij of the Slavonic Version in the Vilna Manuscript Translated into English by H. Leeming and L. Osinkina* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).
0. *Controv*. 1 Praef 11; Translation of Winterbottom from LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).
1. Translation of Stephen MacKenna, *Plotinus: The Enneads*, http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/plotenn/enn001.htm.
2. *Strom*. 1.21. Translation of Ferguson, *Clement*, 119–20.
3. *Contra Faust*. 33.6; trans. by Roland Teske, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean* (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, I/10) (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007). All subsequent quotations of the work will be from this translation.
4. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, passim.
5. One of the chief witnesses he appeals to for this view is Porphyry, in an obscure but oft-mentioned passage that discusses the writings of

Pythagoras. As I will show in Chapter 5, however, Baum completely misconstrues Porphyry's comments.

6. Elsewhere, Origen does indicate that Paul wrote Hebrews (*To Africanus*, 9; and possibly *De Principiis* 3.1.10, etc., although this is only in Rufinus' Latin, not the Greek; see also, though, *On Prayer*, 17; *Commentary on John* 2.6; 10.11). The easiest solution to these discrepancies is simply to suppose that he changed his mind on the question. It should be noted that elsewhere Origen shows an interest in knowing who actual authors were. With respect to the Petrine epistles, for example, he says that Peter "left us one acknowledged epistle, possibly two—though this is doubtful." With respect to the writings of John he says, "In addition, he left an epistle of very few lines, and possibly two more, though their authenticity is denied by some" (ἐπεὶ οὐ πάντες φασὶν γνησίους εἶναι ταύτας) (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.8, 10).

7. See Vessey, "Forging," p. 507, n. 30.

8. Translations of Thomas Halton, *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men* (FC 100; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 84, 48. All subsequent translations of this work will be taken from this edition.

9. Translation Dominic J. Unger and John J. Dillon, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies*, Vol. I (ACW 55; New York, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 76.

0. I do not find persuasive the attempt of A. Sundberg and M. Hahneman to redate the Muratorian Fragment from the late second to the fourth century (see A. C. Sundberg, "Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List," *HTR* 66 [1973]: 1–41; and Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). For incisive critiques, see Henne, "La datation du Canon de Muratori," *RB* 100 (1993): 54–75; C. E. Hill, "The Debate over the Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon," *WTJ* 57 (1995): 437–52; J.–D. Kaestli, "La place du Fragment de Muratori dans l'histoire du canon. À propos de la these de Sundberg et Hahneman," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 15 (1994): 609–34; and especially Joseph Verheyden, "The Canon Muratori: A Matter of Dispute," in J.–M. Auwers and H. J. De Jonge, eds., *The Biblical Canon* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), pp. 487–556.

1. Translation of S. D. F. Salmond in *NPNF*, series 1, vol. 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

Forgery in Antiquity

Motives, Techniques, Intentions, Justifications, and Criteria of Detection

The discussion of the previous chapter leads to an obvious question: If literary forgery was extensively condemned in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, why was it, at the same time, so widely practiced? This question takes us directly to the matter of motivation: What drove so many authors to make false authorial claims? Wolfgang Speyer in particular has recognized motivation as a fundamental aspect of the broader phenomenon: "Failing to develop the intentions of forgers would be equivalent to failing to understand their forgeries. Motive alone explains the forgery."[1]

We are in the fortunate position of having vestiges of an ancient discourse on motivation. It is true that only rarely (and never in our period) do ancient forgers themselves explain why they did what they did.[2] And rarely (again, never in our period) is there systematic reflection on the matter by critics; only later writers attempted taxonomies of motivation. These are still worth examining. But from our period itself (prior to the fifth century CE) we do have numerous discussions of individual instances and clear ascriptions of motive by those who claim to have uncovered the

deceitful practices of others. These discussions do not give unqualified indications of what individual forgers were actually thinking when they produced their work: a critic ascribing motivation to another is a different kind of "evidence" from forgers explaining their own motivations.[3] At the same time, the ancient discussions do give us a clear sense of what motivations were conceivable, sensible, and plausible in the ancient context. Before creating a kind of taxonomy of our own, we might consider the one instance, from a slightly later period, in which a forger attempted to justify his actions once they were detected.

A LATER DISCUSSION OF MOTIVATION

The author was a Christian presbyter of Marseille named Salvian, who around 440 CE published the book *Timothei ad Ecclesiam Libri IV*.[4] The name "Timothy," of course, had clear apostolic connections from Pauline times. In his letter to the church, "Timothy" inveighed against a community that had grown rich and soft, while advocating radical almsgiving to the church (in the divestment of property). In his concern for total commitment to the gospel and an ascetic style of life, Salvian was not far removed from the concerns of another author, from about the same time, a pseudonymous "Titus" (the other of Paul's Pastoral companions) who wrote a scathing attack on Christians who indulged in the joys of the flesh, condemning anyone, married or not, who engaged in sexual activities. The author of the forged letter of Titus was never discovered. But the author of the forged letter of Timothy was, by none other than his own bishop, Salonius of Geneva.

Long before the incident, Salonius and Salvian had been members of the monastic community at Lerins, where, for a time, Salvian was Salonius' teacher. But eventually the student surpassed the instructor in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and when the letter of "Timothy" came to his attention, he immediately, for reasons never given, suspected that in fact it had been written by his former teacher and colleague. He evidently confronted Salvian on the matter, and Salvian wrote a letter in self-defense.

In this, his ninth letter, Salvian does not directly admit to having written *Timothei ad Ecclesiam*. But there is really no doubt about the matter, as he

explains why the pseudonymous author (of whom he speaks in the third person) did what he did. That is to say, he explains his motivations.

On one hand, Salvian insists, the name of an author should not matter to a reader: "In the case of every book we ought to be more concerned about the intrinsic value of its contents than about the name of its author."[5] So too, "Since the name [of the author] is immaterial, there is no use in asking about the author's name so long as the reader profits from the book itself." These pleas ring hollow, however, in light of the rest of Salvian's self-defense: If he really thought that an author's name did not matter, why would he write pseudonymously? Why not write in his own name? Or even better, if names do not matter, why not write the book anonymously? The question is exacerbated by the fact that Salvian otherwise wrote extensively in his own name. His *De gubernatione dei* still survives, and other works were known in Christian antiquity.[6]

Still, Salvian's answer is straightforward. He recognizes his own insignificance and knows that readers do in fact think it matters who produced a writing. He therefore "wisely selected a pseudonym for his book for the obvious reason that he did not wish the obscurity of his own person to detract from the influence of his otherwise valuable book." If the authority of a book is rooted in the prestige of an author, then obviously a pseudonym is necessary: "For this reason the present writer chose to conceal his identity in every respect for fear that his true name would perhaps detract from the influence of his book, which really contains much that is exceedingly valuable."

Given this confession of motivation, what Salvian claims next may seem a bit surprising, if not downright duplicitous. Why did he choose the name Timothy in particular? Readers naturally took the name to refer to Paul's Pastoral companion, hence Salonius' distraught reaction. But in clear tension with his earlier assertion that an unknown person would not be accepted as an authoritative source, Salvian claims that he chose the name purely for its symbolic associations. Just as the evangelist Luke wrote to "Theophilus" because he wrote "for the love of God," so too the author of this treatise wrote as "Timothy," that is, "for the honor of God." In other words, he chose the pseudonym as a pen name.

Even though many critics today continue simply to take Salvian's word for it,[7] the explanation does not satisfy. If Salvian meant what he said, that

the reason for choosing a pseudonymous name was to authorize the account—since a treatise written by an obscure or unknown person has no authority—then how can he also say that the specific pseudonymous name was not that of an authority figure (Paul's companion Timothy) but of an unknown, obscure, and anonymous person intent on honoring God?

Scholars determined to follow Salvian's lead in getting him off Salonius' hook have pursued various angles. Norbert Brox thinks it significant that Salvian claims in the letter to be humble ("we are urged to avoid every pretense of earthly vainglory.… The writer … is humble in his own sight, self-effacing, thinking only of his own utter insignificance"); for Brox, the choice of the pseudonym was consistent with ascetic practices of self-abnegation that Salvian, in part, endorsed in the treatise of "Timothy."[8] Brox notes that on two other occasions in his writings Salvian quotes himself, both times anonymously. He chose, in other words, to keep himself, and so his name, out of the limelight.

There is some merit to this view, but it does not really solve the problem.[9] Quoting oneself in the third person is not the same thing as writing in the name of someone else: if keeping out of the public eye was the key, then, as I have pointed out, Salvian could have written *Ad Ecclesiam* anonymously. Moreover, the other examples of the literary self-abnegation that Brox cites—starting with Paul's discussion of his ecstatic removal to the third heaven in 2 Corinthians—involve instances in which an author actually uses his own name (i.e., 2 Corinthians is orthonymous). Brox does not, that is, adduce anything analogous to Salvian's letter. What is completely analogous is the slew of forged writings from the early Christian tradition, numerous texts put in circulation by authors claiming to be apostles and companions of apostles, including letters allegedly written both to and by Timothy and Titus, canonical and noncanonical. Moreover, it should be reemphasized that Salvian did write other books using his own name.

Even less convincing is the more recent claim of David Lambert that Salvian's ninth letter was actually written as a preface to *Ad Ecclesiam*.[10] It is true that in the scant manuscript tradition it is located there; but one can easily imagine why a scribe might arrange Salvian's writings in that order, so as to explain the true nature of the authorship of the tractate. It can hardly make sense for Salvian to have put it there initially: the letter is a

response to objections raised subsequent to the publication of the tractate, a self-defense for having circulated it under the name of someone else.

We do not know how Salonius reacted to Salvian's defensive ninth letter. But it is relatively clear how he reacted to the tractate *Ad Ecclesiam* itself. He considered it a forgery, he objected to the literary practice, and he called the author to account for it. Moreover, it is difficult to take Salvian at his word that he never meant anyone to think that he really was Timothy, the companion of Paul. Otherwise his explanation that no one would heed an unknown or obscure author makes no sense: Who is more unknown or obscure than a person who does not exist, or one whose name is not even given? But his explanation for why he could not write the book orthonymously is of considerable value: it shows that one of the motivations for producing pseudepigraphic works was to get a hearing for one's views, by claiming to be someone who deserved to be heard. That will be a fundamental point for the rest of our study.

Before stressing its importance for the polemical forgeries of early Christianity, we would do well to consider the range of motivations for forgery attested in our ancient sources.

TAXONOMY OF MOTIVATIONS

It will be useful at the outset to differentiate between the concepts of motivation and intention. An intention indicates what a person plans to accomplish; a motivation indicates why she or he wants to accomplish it. A novelist may intend to write a best-selling book (that is what he would like to accomplish, his intention); but he may be motivated by a range of factors, including, for example, the desire to make a vast fortune and to become a household name. Later I will be furthering my argument that forgers in antiquity intended to deceive their reader into thinking they were someone other than who they really were.[11] But what drove them to do so? That is the question of motivation. I should stress that just as texts could perform a range of functions—rarely does an author write for just one reason—so too a forgery could be motivated by a number of reasons. The categories presented here, in other words, are not meant to be mutually exclusive.

To Make a Profit

It is sometimes, wrongly, claimed that the only reason for producing a forgery is to turn a profit. The New Testament scholar J. C. Fenton, for example, in an attempt to exculpate the authors of canonical pseudepigrapha from charges of deceit, argues that "A forger is one who writes in the name of another for his own profit: they [NT authors] did not do so. Forgery involves deceit for gain: pseudonymity did not."[12] Not only is this playing fast and loose with terminology (by fiat, a forger is out for personal profit), it overlooks an entire host of reasons that forgers had for doing what they did.

Still, it is true that on occasion—though not within the early Christian tradition—forgers were driven by a profit motive. The best-known evidence comes from Galen, who indicates that the construction of, and competition between, the libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum spawned an active forgery market, driven by the need of the respective librarians to boast holdings in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, along with Plato, Hippocrates, Aristotle, and others.[13] As he puts the matter in one place: "For before the kings in both Alexandria and Pergamum eagerly endeavored to purchase ancient works, no one as yet produced pseudonymous writings (οὐδέπω ψευδῶς ἐπεγέγραπτο σύγγραμμα)." Once money could be made for such texts, however, all that changed: many pseudepigrapha were then written (πολλὰ ψευδῶς ἐπιγράφοντες).[14]

Galen is wrong about the first part, since there were ample numbers of forgeries before the construction of the Hellenistic libraries. But the idea that plays and treatises in the names of the masters started to appear with alarming frequency once someone was willing to pay for them is completely plausible. Galen elsewhere gives a specific, related instance: one enterprising fellow took Hippocrates' *Nature of Man* and Polybius' *Regimen of Health*, both small-size volumes, and combined them in order to fetch a better price at one of the libraries.[15]

The evidence for this motive is not limited to Galen. In one of his humorous satires, *The Mistaken Critic*, Lucian charges:

> There is nothing invidious in fending off destitution by every means.… However you will permit me to praise one thing, anyhow, that very pretty performance of yours when you yourself—and you know it—composed the "Tisias' Handbook," that work of an ill-

> omened crow, thus robbing that stupid old man of thirty gold pieces; for because of Tisias' name he paid seven hundred and fifty drachmas for the book, gulled into it by you.[16]

After our period, Olympiodorus claims that since Juba, king of Libya, so loved Pythagorean writings, Ptolemy Philadelphius Aristotelian writings, and Pisistratus tyrant of Athens Homeric writings, they were willing to pay gold for them. As a result, many entrepreneurial types forged such works and sold them on demand.[17] John Philoponus confirms the report about both Juba and Ptolemy.[18] Furthermore, in one of the classic studies of forgery, A. Gudeman speculates that the hundreds of pseudonymous speeches and orations from antiquity are best accounted for by thinking that booksellers cobbled together as many school exercises on different orators as possible in order to have an exhaustive collection for sale, and so outdo their competition.[19]

For Political and Religious Authorization

More commonly, forgeries were produced for political and religious reasons (these are not always distinct, of course), to authorize or attack, under authority, political or religious figures and institutions. A number of instances are attested of forgers producing prophecies or oracular pronouncements for matters of state, such as when, at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Galba, a two-hundred-year-old set of verses was "discovered" in the temple of Jupiter Clunia indicating that a ruler would come from Spain.[20] The verses may have been presented as an oracular pronouncement of Jupiter himself. If so, this is forgery with aplomb: the alleged author is not claiming to be a famous human authority but the king of the gods. In any event, there was a long tradition of such oracular forgeries; Alexander the Great was one beneficiary, as in the course of his conquests he was presented with a forged oracle on a copper plate near the city of Xanthus in Lycia, which indicated that the time would come when the Persian Empire should be destroyed by the Greeks.[21]

So too the supporters of Julius Caesar could find cold comfort in an oracle "discovered" in Capua, in the grave of its founder Capys, which predicted the murder of a "son of Ilium" by his own relatives, after which

things would go badly in Italy. Speyer suspects that Octavian and Antony themselves were responsible for the forged oracle, as it provided them with divine sanction to ostracize the murderers. Suetonius, who reports the event, swears to its truthfulness: "And let no one think this tale a myth or a lie, for it is vouched for by Cornelius Balbus, an intimate friend of Caesar."[22] Somewhat later, Suetonius reports, Augustus was the victim rather than the culprit of a forgery. But in this case he had the last word, as he punished a certain Patavinus for having "circulated a most scathing letter about him (Augustus) under the name of the young Agrippa."[23] The forging of political letters was a salient issue in the earlier struggles for power at the end of the Republic, as Asconius informs us in no uncertain terms in his commentary on Cicero's *In toga candida*, faulting, once again, Antony, but this time Catilina as well (*In toga candida*, 94). Other forgeries involving political intrigues are reported by Josephus, including one I have already mentioned, a letter forged in the name of Herod's son Alexander that spoke of his plan to murder his father.[24]

At other times forgeries were used to authorize the establishment of religious institutions, such as the oracle at Abonoteichus established by Alexander, Lucian's infamous "False Prophet." To demonstrate the divine approval of the new oracle, according to Lucian, Alexander and a cohort forged a set of bronze tablets and buried them in the temple of Apollo in Chalcedon. When dug up, these divine writings indicated that Asclepius and his father Apollo were soon to move to Pontus and take up residence at Abonoteichus. Here is one instance in which a forgery was spectacularly successful (*Alexander the False Prophet*, 10).

As Apologia

A closely related motivation, especially in Jewish and Christian circles, involves forgeries that functioned apologetically. Among Jewish instances, none is better known than the Letter of Aristeas, defending the divine origin of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.[25] Also worth noting are the surviving Sibylline oracles.[26] The twelve books, numbered, somewhat confusingly, 1–9 and 11–14, have been heavily Christianized; but only book 6 (and possibly the fragmentary book 7) is completely Christian. All the others are Jewish in whole or part. We will be returning to a fuller

discussion of the Sibyllines in a later chapter; here it is enough to note their apologetic function. The original Jewish oracles present an ancient, divinely inspired, pagan prophetess who discusses, sometimes cryptically, the institutions, practices, and views of Judaism. What better authority to shore up a religious tradition under periodic attack by its (non-Jewish) cultured despisers? When Christians took over the texts, they served a doubly apologetic purpose: a pagan prophetess favorable to Judaism and antagonistic to Rome predicts the incarnation of the Son of God. Now it is the Christian faith that is attested as divine by an inspired and unimpeachable source, pagan in origin and Jewish by inclination.[27]

Whether Jewish apologists made extensive use of the Sibyllina is difficult to say; but there is no ambiguity about the delight that Christians took in them, as they are explicitly mentioned as early as Justin and cited as early as Athenagoras.[28] They caused no little controversy by the end of the second century, as the pagan opponent of all things Christian, Celsus, accused Christians of inventing the prophecies themselves. Origen, in his inimitable style, challenged his long-dead opponent to prove it: "[Celsus asserts] that we have interpolated many blasphemous things in her verses, though he does not give any instance of our interpolation. He would have proved this point had he showed that the older copies were purer and had not the verses which he supposes to have been interpolated."[29]

Some Jewish apologetic forgeries served clear political purposes, including the letter mentioned by Josephus between Arius, King of Sparta (died 265 BCE), to the Jewish high priest Onias III, a letter that showed the Jews to be blood relatives of the Spartans—obviously of some apologetic moment for Jews in the Hellenistic world.[30] The letter is cited as well in 1 Macc. 12.7–9. In other instances the apologia functioned more to justify Jewish religious practices (if, again, we can differentiate on any level between politics and religion). This is the case with the lesser-known Letter of Mordechai (adopted father of Esther) to Alexander the Great, a Jewish apologia for the worship of the one God instead of idols and for maintaining high ethical standards, including the refusal to assert power and to engage in sexual immorality. The letter, originally in Greek, occurs at the beginning of some manuscripts of the Alexander Romance, but dates from early imperial times.[31]

Christians too employed epistolary forgeries for apologetic ends. This continues to be the most plausible explanation for the correspondence of Paul and Seneca.[32] Christians of the late fourth century were perplexed by the fact that the great apostle of the early church, whose powerful and persuasive writings formed the basis not only of the New Testament but also of the church's entire theology, was completely unknown to other great thinkers of the day. The forged attempt to show that Paul was revered by none other than Seneca is widely seen today as rather feeble. Little of substance is said in the letters, and Seneca reproves the apostle for his rather pedestrian writing style. In Christian antiquity, on the other hand, the letters were a real boon, and were accepted as authentic—and as irrefragable evidence of the apostle's greatness—almost immediately. They are paraded to apologetic effect already by Jerome (*Vir. ill*. 12) and Augustine (*Epist*. 153, 14).

One could well argue for a similar apologetic function lying behind the forged correspondence of Jesus and Abgar, cited by Eusebius and forming, then, the basis for the *Doctrina Addai*.[33] As we will see later, the letters serve an anti-Judaic purpose; but in no small measure they also elevate Jesus' importance. Far from being an obscure preacher from rural nowhere, he is recognized by one of the great kings of the region and his help is solicited in a time of need.[34] Royal acclamation comes to Jesus in yet other, nonepistolary, forgeries, including above all the Acts of Pilate and the other works of the Pilate cycle.[35] Here, rather than being guilty of crimes against the state, Jesus is portrayed as innocent, royal, and even divine—confessed to be divine, in fact, by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, by King Herod, and by the Roman Emperor Tiberius himself. I will have more to say about the Pilate cycle in a later chapter.[36]

Defamation of Character

Polemics can be seen as the flip side of apologetics, attack rather than defense. Not surprisingly, assaults on others—for political, philosophical, or personal reasons—are among the most widely attested motivations for the production of forgeries in antiquity.

We have already seen instances of political attacks in Cicero's complaints as amplified by Asconius (*In toga candida*, 94); in the court of

Augustus, as recorded by Suetonius (*Life of Augustus*, 51, 55); and in the household of Herod described by Josephus (*War* 1, 26, 3).

Philosophical attacks facilitated by forgery were at least as common, or even more so, judging at least from our surviving sources. One of the better-known instances is related by Pausanias in his story of Anaximenes, a rhetorician who, like all good rhetoricians, was skilled in imitating the style of others. Out of a personal vendetta against his fellow rhetorician Theopompus, Anaximenes wrote and widely circulated a treatise in his opponent's name, following closely his style; the treatise abused the citizens of Athens, Sparta, and Thebes. As Pausanias tells us, "Though Anaximenes was the author of the treatise, hatred of Theopompus grew throughout the length of Greece" (*Description of Greece*, 6.18.5).[37]

A comparable account is found in Diogenes Laertius, who indicates that Diotimus, a philosophical opponent of Epicurus, circulated fifty obscene letters in his name (*Lives* 10.3). This did nothing, as one might imagine, for Epicurus' reputation as a hedonist. Evidence that the story is not simply apocryphal is provided by Athenaeus, who indicates, as we have seen, that one of Epicurus' incensed followers, Zeno, tracked Diotimus down and murdered him for his spiteful act (*Banqueters* 13.611 B).

Other writings of Epicurus that were commonly accepted as authentic in antiquity spoke harshly of representatives of other philosophical schools. As Diogenes indicates:

> Epicurus used to call this Nausiphanes jelly-fish, an illiterate, a fraud, and a trollop; Plato's school he called "the toads of Dionysius," their master himself the "golden" Plato, and Aristotle a profligate.… Protagoras a pack carrier, the scribe of Democritus, and village school master; Heraclitus a muddler.… The Cynics foes of Greece; the Dialecticians despoilers; and Pyrrho an ignorant boor.[38]

Cicero says something similar.[39] W. Crönert, however, convincingly argues that these alleged writings of Epicurus in fact all derive from a single letter written by a single author, forged, again, in order to cast aspersions on Epicurus' reputation.[40] The letter is not one of those produced by Diotimus,

since those, unlike this one, were obscene. In any event, slandering Epicurus through forgery appears to have been de rigueur.

Politicians and philosophers were not the only ones subject to forged assault, as we saw at the outset of the study in the case of the "Parthenopaeus" forged in the name of Sophocles by Dionysius the Renegade, in part to make his former teacher Heraclides look foolish. On several occasions Martial complains about poems forged in his name to sully his reputation.

> My page has not wounded even those it justly hates, and fame won from another's blush is not dear to me! What does this avail me when certain folk would pass off as mine darts wet with the blood of Lycambes, and under my name a man vomits his viperous venom who owns he cannot bear the light of day? (*Epigrams* 7.12)[41]
>
> The scurrilities of home-born slaves, low railing, and the foul insults of a hawker's tongue … [these] a certain skulking poet scatters abroad and would have them appear as mine. Do you believe this Priscus? That a parrot speaks with the voice of a quail.… Why should I toil to be known so evilly when stillness can cost me nothing? (*Epigrams* 10.3)[42]

With other public figures, the attacks were more direct, as comes out in the trial of Apuleius:

> And then there was that fabricated letter that was neither written by my hand nor plausibly forged. They intended it to show that I worked upon the woman by means of blandishments. But why use blandishments if I had put my trust in magic? Anyway, how did this letter come into their hands, for, naturally, it would have been sent to Pudentilla by way of a trusted person, as happens in such cases. And moreover, why would I write in such defective words, such barbarous language? … Yes, this is how things are, it is plain for everyone: the man who was not able to read a letter by Pudentilla in perfect Greek had less trouble in reading this one and put it across better, since it was his own. (*Apol*. 87)[43]

So too in Philostratus' defense of the rectitude of Apollonius in the face of published opposition: "And they have forged a certain letter (καὶ τινα ἐπιστολὴν ἀνέπλασαν) in the Ionic dialect, of tedious prolixity, in which they pretend that Apollonius went down on his knees to Domitian and besought him to release him of his bonds."[44]

Analogous instances occur in Christian sources, as when Augustine avers that the enemies of Christ have attempted to slur the Savior's reputation by associating him with magical practices, in a letter forged in his name addressed to Peter and Paul (*Cons. Evang*. 1.10). Jerome, as we have seen, on one occasion had to defend himself against slurs leveled against him in a forged correspondence: "he found there a letter purporting to be written by me … in all of which there is not a word of truth.[45]

The use of forgery in polemical contexts, in any event, was widespread, as seen clearly by Horst Balz: "Forgeries were considered literary means of war and were answered with counter-forgeries."[46] Further examples of this phenomenon from within the Christian literary tradition will occupy us for the bulk of this study.

To Supplement the Tradition

Some forgeries appear to have been produced in order to fill in a lacuna known to exist in a tradition. As an example, Plato indicates in the Phaedo (60 D) that while awaiting his death in prison, Socrates composed some "lyrics," based on Aesop's fables and the Prelude to Apollo. Later some such verses were in circulation, as attested by Diogenes Laertius, who indicates that some people claimed that Socrates composed a final paean to Apollo and Artemis between his condemnation and death, two lines of which are quoted: "All hail, Apollo, Delos' lord! Hail Artemis, ye noble pair!" The authenticity of the lines, however, were called into doubt, as noted by Diogenes himself: "But Dionysodorus denies that he wrote the paean."[47]

The Christian tradition attests numerous forgeries intended to fill gaps in the dominical and apostolic traditions. In no small measure this accounts for the stories of Jesus' infancy in wide circulation, later to be written down in such works as the (redactionally) pseudepigraphic Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, and for the narratives of his

activities between his death and resurrection, as in the Gospel of Nicodemus. From the apostolic side the most famous instance is "Paul's" extant letter to the Laodiceans, to which we will devote considerable attention later. If nothing else, the letter was occasioned in part by the mention of some such correspondence in the canonical, but also probably forged, letter to the Colossians (4:16). If a letter "from Laodicea" was said to have once existed, it is no surprise that someone—or more than one person, as we will see—invented a version of it. The surviving text may well have been meant also to provide an alternative to the Marcionite forgery already in circulation, much as somewhat later, the Christian Acts of Pilate, detailing episodes from Jesus' trial and death, were meant to replace the earlier, and extremely popular, but forged, pagan Acts of Pilate, which probably explained in narrative detail how Jesus fully deserved his fate.[48]

Philosophical Schools?

Judging from discussions of ancient practices of pseudepigraphy in New Testament scholarship, one might think that one of the most commonly attested contexts in antiquity for writing under an assumed name was in the philosophical schools, where, allegedly, students commonly wrote treatises of their own but signed them in the name of their teacher as an act of humility, since, after all, the thoughts of the student were simply those given him by one who was greater. In point of fact, this is one of the least attested motivations for pseudepigrapha in antiquity, and there are solid reasons for questioning whether it was ever a motivation at all. As this judgment stands at odds with what Neutestamentlers have been taught and have themselves taught for decades, it will be necessary to devote a considerable amount of attention to the issue and to the ancient evidence that lies at the heart of it.

Pseudepigraphy in the Philosophical Schools: The Widespread Scholarly View

The common view of New Testament scholars has been recently expressed in an otherwise helpful article on "Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon" by Harry Gamble, who maintains that there were occasions in

antiquity where "pseudonymous authorship appears to have been conventional and innocuous," giving as his key example the "followers of Pythagoras" who "composed philosophic and scientific works under his name, ascribing to him all that they knew."[49] So too, Margaret MacDonald, in her commentary on Colossians and Ephesians, can state: "Viewing Colossians (or Ephesians) as deutero-Pauline should not be mistakenly understood as meaning that these documents are simply examples of forgery. For example, to write in the name of a philosopher who was one's patron could be seen as a sign of honor bestowed upon that person."[50] So too in another standard commentary on Colossians, Markus Barth and Helmut Blank claim that: "Pseudonymous documents, especially letters with philosophical content, were set in circulation because disciples of a great man intended to express, by imitation, their adoration of their revered master and to secure or to promote his influence upon a later generation under changed circumstances."[51] And in a study of Ephesians Michael Gese maintains:

> Students to a greater or lesser extent put the thoughts of their teachers into writing, whereas great heads of schools frequently taught only orally. The authorial ascription therefore named the intellectual author to whom in the last instance the content of the work could be traced. People in antiquity did not perceive such an ascription as forgery.[52]

I cite these studies not because they are striking in their novelty, but because they express the *opinio communis*.[53]

This view, however, is not only expressed in commentaries on New Testament pseudepigrapha. It is a major contention among scholars of forgery as well, as a look at the recent study of Armin Baum and the older work of Norbert Brox makes particularly clear.[54]

One might ask what ancient evidence New Testament scholars provide in support of their assertions about the pseudepigraphic practices of the philosophical schools. In most cases—for example, in the vast majority of biblical commentaries—the answer is completely unambiguous: as a rule, they cite no evidence for the practice at all. The existence of the practice is simply asserted, stated as a fact, as if it must be so because so many

scholars have assumed it is so. It is striking that those few (e.g., Baum) who do appeal to ancient evidence never cite any sources from the time of the New Testament or of the second century. In no small measure this is because no such evidence exists.

The sources that are sometimes discussed—at some length by Baum—come from later times. The two that have figured most prominently in the discussion are the Neoplatonists Porphyry and Iamblichus, who speak of the literary output of the school of Pythagoras, who lived eight hundred years earlier. As it turns out, however, one of these two sources, Porphyry, does not say what scholars have claimed he says, and the other, Iamblichus, is highly problematic for reconstructing what actually happened in the Pythagorean school. Neither source mentions anything about "common practices" of any of the other philosophical schools, let alone of philosophical schools in general, and neither says a word about practices of pseudepigraphy in the time period of our concern, the early Christian centuries.

OTHER ANCIENT SOURCES

Before turning our attention to the alleged evidence of Porphyry and Iamblichus, we might consider several other sources that could conceivably be used to support the idea that students of philosophers wrote with impunity in the names of their teachers. In his thirty-third epistle, Seneca indicates that whereas the sayings of the Stoic teachers all differ from one another, those of the Epicureans are unified: "With them, on the other hand, whatever Hermarchus says, or Metrodorus, is ascribed to one source. In that brotherhood, everything that any man utters is spoken under the leadership and commanding authority of one alone."[55] This statement could conceivably be construed as meaning that everything an Epicurean wrote he ascribed to Epicurus. But in fact the comment says nothing about Epicurean authors writing books while claiming to be Epicurus. It is referring to oral communications and indicates that what others in the school say, they attribute to the authority (one might assume) of Epicurus himself. Even if Seneca is referring to writings of the school, the attribution of one's own views to Epicurus could, of course, be accomplished in orthonymous as easily as in forged writings (e.g., by quoting Epicurus).

Suetonius, in his treatise "On Grammarians," says of Antonius Gnipho:

> He wrote a great deal. Atieus Philologus, however, declares that he left but two volumes, "On the Latin Language," maintaining that the other works attributed to him were those of his pupils and not his own (nam cetera scripta discipulorum eius esse non ipsius). Yet his own name is sometimes found in them. (ch. 7)[56]

This comment does come closer to indicating that students of a philosopher might write a book claiming to be their teacher. On closer examination, however, it appears instead to indicate that anonymous books by students were sometimes falsely *attributed* to the teacher. It is not clear what it means that his own name was found in them; it is not obvious, in any event, that it must mean that his name was found in the authorial inscription (i.e., as placed there by the author himself, claiming to be Antonius Gnipho; it could just as well meant that his name is found in, say, an inscription added to the writing by a later editor). In any event, Suetonius does not indicate anything about this being a common practice, let alone an acceptable one. On the contrary, he seems to want to know who actually wrote the books.

Finally, Diogenes Laertius speaks of works written in Pythagoras' name by others. He claims that Pythagoras wrote three treatises, "On Education," "On Statesmanship," and "On Nature"; others were written in his name (*Lives* 8.6–8). Here again, however, there is no indication that Diogenes saw this as an acceptable practice—that is, as something other than forgery in the negative sense—and he says nothing about it being common. And he, like Suetonius, is interested in knowing who actually wrote the books.

THE PROBLEM OF PORPHYRY

In his extensive analysis of pseudepigraphy and canon, Armin Baum maintains that a key ancient witness to the common and accepted practice, in ancient philosophical schools, of writing treatises in the name of a teacher is the Neoplatonist Porphyry (234–304 CE).[57] In this he is followed by other scholars, including Martina Janssen in an otherwise full and insightful article.[58]

Before evaluating what Porphyry actually says in the passage in question, it is worth pointing out that this alleged witness to the "common" practice in philosophical schools refers only to the school of Pythagoras and, yet more significant, dates 750–800 years after the fact.[59] How useful such a statement could be for understanding what was happening in early Christianity (say, two hundred years earlier) is very much open to question. But is Porphyry even referring to pseudepigraphic practices of Pythagoras' school, so many centuries earlier?

As Baum notes, the passage is not preserved in the Greek manuscript tradition of Porphyry, but only in an Arabic translation. The text is found in the lengthy book by Ibn Abi Usaybi'a, *Kitab 'uyun al-anba' fi tabaqat al-atibba*,[60] which, understandably, Baum did not actually read; he relied instead on the account of B. L. Van der Waerden.[61] I too do not read medieval Arabic. But the passage is important, and so I asked my colleague Carl Ernst, who specializes in Medieval Islam, to translate it for me. The passage does not say what Baum claims it does.

> But as for the books of Pythagoras the sage, which Archytas the Tarentine philosopher collected by himself, they are eighty books. But those that he made special effort, with all his strength, to compile, compose (*ta'līf*), and collect, from all the old men who were of the type of Pythagoras the philosopher, his school, and the inheritors of his sciences, man after man, these were two hundred books in number. And he who was unique in the essence of his intellect [i.e., Archytas] set aside from them the false books ascribed to the tongue of the sage and his name, which shameless people fabricated.

Ibn Abi Usaybi'a goes on to list twelve of the forged books.

Baum argues that in the passage Porphyry differentiates between eighty books that Pythagoras wrote, two hundred that his followers wrote (with impunity) in his name, and twelve that were later forgeries misrepresenting his views. But as can be seen, what the passage instead says is that Pythagoras wrote eighty books, that older men who belonged to the Pythagorean group wrote two hundred books, and that other books, of which Porphyry names twelve, were forgeries in the name of Pythagoras.

The key point is this: Porphyry decidedly does not indicate that the two hundred books by Pythagoras' followers were written *in Pythagoras' name*. They were simply written by students of his school.

There is no problem with thinking that the followers of Pythagoras wrote books. We have these books more fully attested. They were written by the likes of Hippodamus, Okkelos, Philoaus, Periktyone, and Phyntis. They are orthonymous, and have been discussed in a number of important studies.[62] In other words, Baum has gotten the situation precisely wrong. The overarching claim of his study is that a book in antiquity was considered a "forgery" only if the *content* was judged not to derive from the named author, and Porphyry is appealed to as a witness—on the false assumption that Porphyry accepted the two hundred pseudepigraphic Pythagorean books since they taught the views of Pythagoras himself. But in fact, Porphyry is irrelevant to the question, because he does not mention two hundred books written by Pythagoras' followers in his name. He speaks only of two hundred books written by Pythagoras' followers.

Moreover, there can be no question about what Porphyry, at least according to this text, thought about books that were falsely produced in Pythagoras' name. Of these he says the following (again, from a private translation of Ernst):

> The criminal individuals who fabricated these lying books that we have mentioned, according to traditions that have reached us, are Aristotle the Younger, Nikos (Nuqūs) known as the essentially erroneous, one of the Cretans called Konios, Mégalos, and Fūkhajawāqā (?), along with others even more reprehensible than they. And that was who proposed to them (others?) the fabrication of these lying books with the tongue of the philosopher Pythagoras and his name, so that [these writings] would be accepted among the moderns because of him, so they would honor, prefer, and share them.

Those who produced books in Pythagoras' name are called "criminal." Their books are "lying" "fabrications." They were written pseudepigraphically because by putting Pythagoras' name on them, the

books were more likely to be accepted by their readers. For Porphyry this is a nefarious motivation.

In short, Porphyry cannot be used to establish the "common" practice in the philosophical schools—or even in the Pythagorean school—of publishing writings in the name of a revered teacher with impunity. Some followers of Pythagoras did produce such forged works, but the books were labeled lies and fabrications and the authors were called shameless criminals.

THE WITNESS OF IAMBLICHUS

The only other witness to the pseudepigraphic practices of the Pythagorean school writing within a full millennium of the death of its founder (apart from Diogenes Laertius) is another late antique neo-Platonist, Iamblichus (245–325 CE). Two passages from Iamblichus' writings are sometimes cited to establish the Pythagorean practices, but only one of them is germane to the question. The first occurs in Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras:* "Of the [Pythagoric] writings that are now circulating, some were written by Pythagoras himself, but others consist of what he was heard to say [τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκροάσεως αὐτοῦ συγγεγράφθαι]; for this reason the authors do not attach their own names to these books but attribute them to Pythagoras as being his (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ ἑαυτῶν ἐπεφήμιζον αὐτά, ἀλλὰ εἰς Πυθαγόραν ἀνέφερον αὐτὰ ὡς ἐκείνου ὄντα)..."[63] At first glance, this may indeed seem to indicate that Pythagoras' students published their own treatises in his name; but in fact, Iamblichus is referring to a very different phenomenon: the publication of Pythagoras' lecture notes by his students. These publications literally contain his own words, not those of the writers, and so it would not have been proper for them to claim the books for themselves. I will be dealing with the question of published lecture notes shortly.

The other reference in Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras*, on the other hand, does in fact deal with the publication of works by others in Pythagoras' name, and appears to say what scholars have said it says: "It was a fine custom of theirs also to ascribe and assign everything to Pythagoras, and only very seldom to claim personal fame for their discoveries, for there are very few of them indeed to whom works are ascribed personally."[64] Here Iamblichus indicates his own view about what happened among the

followers of Pythagoras so many centuries earlier. But the relevance of this passage for understanding widespread views in antiquity is much open to dispute.

The first thing to note is that Iamblichus is referring only to the followers of Pythagoras. Nowhere does he say this was a widespread practice—or indeed, a practice at all—in any of the other philosophical schools. Moreover, it cannot be stressed enough that Iamblichus is writing eight hundred years after Pythagoras. Are there any grounds for thinking that he would actually know the practices of his school? If he does know, what are his sources of information? If they once existed, they do not exist any longer; this is the first we learn of such a practice.

It may be that Iamblichus is referring not to Pythagoras' immediate followers but to the later Pythagoreans of the Hellenistic period. But here too he would be speaking of literary practices from four hundred to five hundred years earlier. How would he know about these? And if he is right, why are these practices not mentioned by any authors—including biographers of Pythagoras—writing earlier? In fact, the questions keep on coming.

LATER SUPPORTERS OF IAMBLICHUS' VIEW

It is true that two much-later Neoplatonists—Olympiodorus from the mid-sixth century CE and somewhat later his student Elias—also make this claim about the Pythagoreans. Elias is dependent on Olympiodorus and so cannot count as independent evidence. And Olympiodorus himself may simply be relying on the same neo-Platonic tradition as found in Iamblichus from more than two centuries earlier. In any event, Olympiodorus is the first writer to give us anything resembling a taxonomy of motives for the practices of pseudepigraphy. In his *Prolegomenon* Olympiodorus states his desire to establish the ways in which books are "forged" (or better, "bastardized," provided with false names; διὰ πόσους τρόπους ἐνοθεύοντο τὰ βιβλία) and the criteria one can use to "distinguish the genuine from the forged" ((διαχωρίζειν τὰ γνήσια ἀπὸ τῶν νόθων). In Olympiodorus' judgment, books are forged/provided with false authorial names for three reasons: from the ambition/ambitious rivalry (φιλοτιμία) of kings; the affection/good will of students/disciples; and the homonymy of writers, writings, or notes/commentaries (ὑπομνήματα).[65]

His third category shows that he is concerned simply with the circulation of books under a wrong name (not forgery in the sense I am using it), since homonymy, as we have seen, does not involve a false authorial claim. He explicates his reference to the φιλοτιμία of kings by speaking specifically of Juba, king of Libya, who loved Pythagorean writings; Ptolemy Philadelphius, who loved Aristotelian writings; and Pisistratus tyrant of Athens, who loved Homeric writings. These kings, he indicates, were willing to pay gold for their beloved texts, leading enterprising scholars to invent them. His second category conforms with the statement of Iamblichus: students wrote books in the names of their teachers. He claims that this is true of "all" the books written in the name of Pythagoras. "For Pythagoras left no writings … and so his disciples out of affection/good will put the name Pythagoras on their writings (οἱ οὖν μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ δι᾽εὔνοιαν ποιήσαντες συγγράμματα ἐπέγραψαν τὸ ὄνομα Πυθαγόρου)." As a result, for Olympiodorus, all of the writings in the name of Pythagoras are νόθα.

This statement is sometimes taken as an authoritative account of what happened in the philosophical schools.[66] Here again, however, it is not clear whether Olympiodorus is referring to forgeries in the name of Pythagoras by later writers or to publication of essays based on students' lecture notes (about which, below). And of course if Olympiodorus assumed that Pythagoras published nothing, then it only makes sense that he must draw the corollary: books that bear Pythagoras' name must have been written by students. And if they were written by students, they must have been produced with good will toward the master. And so it must have been an established and accepted practice.

As inexorable as the logic may have seemed to Olympiodorus, it cannot be seen as compelling today. Pythagoras was in fact widely thought to have written numerous books (although a number of ancients denied it). His followers did write books, but in their own names. There were, to be sure, books claiming to be written by Pythagoras that he did not himself write, just as there were books falsely written in the names of Socrates, Epicurus, Jesus, Peter, and Paul. To that extent, the practice was widespread. But this does not mean it was widely respected and approved. On the contrary, every indication is that even in antiquity the practice was widely condemned and censured. Whether forgers—Pythagorean or otherwise—themselves took

the matter lightly is another question, one we will return to at the end of this chapter.

In any event, Olympiodorus lived a thousand years after Pythagoras himself. He shows no evidence of knowing what happened in the wake of Pythagoras, a millennium earlier. There is no reason to assume he is doing anything but repeating hearsay that had been in circulation in Neoplatonic circles since at least the time of Iamblichus, himself writing eight hundred years after the fact.

One is more or less left with an off-the-cuff comment by Iamblichus in support of this alleged practice in Pythagorean circles. It comes as no surprise that recent studies of the matter by scholars of Pythagoreanism draw a strongly negative conclusion, as summarized forcefully by Leonid Zhmud: "The only one (!), who reports such a practice is once again Iamblichus. Up to that point we do not hear of any concrete instance in which a Pythagorean ascribed his discoveries to Pythagoras, and we have furthermore no indication that such a tendency existed in his school."[67]

SOME COUNTER-INDICATIONS

I will draw some conclusions about the practices of forgery in the philosophical schools shortly, after raising several other issues. For now it is enough to provide some counterevidence to Iamblichus' assertion.

It is important to recognize that different Pythagoreans (even in the "school") had their own views and perspectives, and that they had no qualms about expressing them.[68] Most of these later authors wrote orthonymously, and we know of their writings. Others to be sure claimed to be Pythagoras. But this was not seen as an acceptable, let alone a widespread, practice. When these authors were detected, their works were described as forgeries. We have already seen this to be the case with Porphyry and Diogenes Laertius.

Moreover, there were clear reasons for later Pythagoreans wanting to make their writings appear to derive from the great man himself. Among other things, H. Balz and others have argued that the practice provided a greater antiquity for certain Pythagorean views, a desideratum in the face of competing claims of other philosophical traditions.[69] In addition, we have other evidence of Pythagorean authors intentionally trying to deceive their readers about their authorial claims (what would have been the point if

writing in the name of Pythagoras was widely accepted?). We have already seen that King Juba of Mauretania was willing to pay cash on the barrel head for writings of Pythagoras. Also, we have reports of forged Pythagorean manuscripts being artificially "enhanced" to make them look old and therefore authentic.[70] We also have several ancient accounts of faux "discoveries" of Pythagorean texts, meant to assure others of their great antiquity.[71]

There were numerous reasons for Pythagoreans to want to claim that their own writings were the productions of Pythagoras himself. But there is little indeed to suggest that they did so out of humility in a practice that was widely acknowledged in antiquity to be acceptable and sanctioned.

THE PUBLICATION OF LECTURE NOTES

As was already intimated, when it comes to the publication of students' lecture notes we are dealing with a different matter altogether. So far as we can tell, it was widely thought that the written dissemination of a teacher's "classroom" instruction should be under the teacher's name, since he was the one, after all, who had spoken the words. Not all teachers approved of the practice. But what was definitely derided was the alternative of publishing a teacher's words as one's own.

Quintilian gives an interesting instance of the practice, a case in which he was not thoroughly pleased that his words had been published by others:

> Two books on the art of rhetoric are at present circulating under my name, although never published by me or composed for such a purpose. One is a two days' lecture which was taken down by the boys who were my audience. The other consists of such notes as my good pupils succeeded in taking down from a course of lectures on a somewhat more extensive scale. I appreciate their kindness, but they showed an excess of enthusiasm and a certain lack of discretion in doing my utterances the honour of publication.[72]

Quintilian explains the situation because he is now publishing a new treatise on the same topic, and wants it to be clearly understood that the new iteration will be superior to the two published by students in his name.

On the other hand, as we have seen already, students who published their teacher's words as their own were severely chastised for plagiarism. This is instanced in the case of Empedocles, mentioned by Diogenes Laertius: "Timaeus in the ninth book of his *Histories* says he was a pupil of Pythagoras, adding that, having been convicted at that time of stealing his discourses (λέγων ὅτι καταγνωσθεὶς ἐπὶ λογοκλοπίᾳ τότε) he was, like Plato, excluded from taking part in the discussions of the school" (*Lives*, 8.54).

The clearest instance, however, comes in one that is self-attested. Arrian, as is well known, did not attempt to write his own philosophical reflections based on the teachings of Epictetus, but instead recorded, to the best of his ability, what Epictetus himself said. Had he published the teachings under his own name, he would have been guilty, by ancient standards, of plagiarism (witness Empedocles: λογοκλοπία). And so he makes his intentions quite clear at the outset of the Discourses:

> Arrian to Lucius Gellius, greeting: I have not composed these Words of Epictetus as one might be said to "compose" books of this kind, nor have I of my own act published them to the world; indeed, I acknowledge that I have not "composed" them at all. But whatever I heard him say I used to write down, word for word, as best I could, endeavoring to preserve it as a memorial, for my own future use, of his way of thinking and the frankness of his speech.[73]

In short, it was perfectly acceptable to publish the notes of a teacher in his name; but to publish them in one's own name, as if they were one's own teachings, was seen as plagiarism. This is quite different, however, from writing one's own treatise and claiming that it was someone else's, even a beloved teacher's. If the words did not go back to the teacher himself, this would be forgery.[74]

MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Much the same can be said about the ancient medical schools. Here again there are no indications that it was an accepted practice to publish one's own writing under the name of a beloved teacher as an act of humility or for the sake of giving credit where credit was due. Critics were, on the contrary, intent on knowing who actually produced the work. Nowhere is that clearer

than in the one case we are best informed about, the Galenic evaluation of the Hippocratic corpus.[75]

We have in excess of one hundred Greek and more than thirty Latin writings in the name of Hippocrates. In such books as "Concerning the Genuine and Forged (*v*όθ*α*) Writings of Hippocrates," Galen was particularly intent, as the title indicates, on determining which of the writings were genuinely those of the great physician himself and which were produced instead by his sons and students in his name. The latter writings he labeled as νόθα.

There were many possibilities. Some works, in his opinion, were authentically by Hippocrates. Others, such as *De victu acutorum*, were essentially authentic but were published posthumously by someone else, as shown by its disorderly train of thought and the occasional interpolation.[76] In some instances Galen ventured to indicate who the actual authors of the inauthentic works were, for example, Hippocrates' sons Dracon and Thessalus, his son-in-law Polybus, and others of his students. In other instances Galen had to resort to indicating that a work was not authentic, without suggesting the name of an author. Sometimes the more complicated works, such as *De natura hominis*, were said to have multiple authors, one of whom might have been Hippocrates.

As we have seen, Armin Baum has recently maintained that ancient authors considered books authentic so long as the contents could be attributed to the named author, whether or not he actually produced the book. To this end he sees as most significant Galen's views of the seven books on Epidemics. Books 1 and 3, Galen indicates, were actually by Hippocrates. Books 2 and 6, however, were composed by Thessalus after his father's death, on the basis of papers that he left behind. Galen does not suggest that these two books be deprived of Hippocratic authorship, but that they be entitled instead *"Books 1 and 2 of the Notes of Hippocrates" On Epidemics*. Since they are not to be attributed to their real author (Thessalus), in Baum's view, this shows that what matters is not the composer of the work, but the ideas in it. If these are Hippocratic, then the books are rightly attributed to him.[77]

To an extent Baum is right about this, but not for the reason he thinks. It is not simply that the thoughts and ideas happen to be those of Hippocrates. What is important to note is that the books were written on the basis of

papers that Hippocrates left behind. In other words, this is analogous to a student publishing the lecture notes of his teacher. The words really are the teacher's, and so should be attributed to him. To publish them under one's own name would be plagiarism. This is different altogether from publishing one's own views and claiming that they are someone else's. Galen labeled Hippocratic writings of that sort νόθα. For Galen it was extremely important to know which books were γνήσια. Books not giving the words of Hippocrates himself were inauthentic.

Galen was not the only one interested in such matters. From much later comes the clear statement of Augustine, who expresses well the general sentiment of antiquity:

> But even in worldly writings there were well-known authors under whose names many works were produced later, and they were repudiated either because they did not agree with the writings that were certainly theirs or because, at the time when those authors wrote, these writings did not merit to be recognized and to be handed on and commended to posterity by them or their friends. Not to mention others, were not certain books that were produced under the name Hippocrates, the highly renowned physician, rejected as authoritative by physicians? Nor did a certain similarity of topics and language offer them any help. For, compared to the books that it was clear were really Hippocrates' books, they were judged inferior, and they were not known at the same time at which the rest of his writings were recognized as truly his. (*Contra Faust*. 33.6)

Note carefully: determining the actual author mattered, not just to Augustine but to the critics that he references as writing before him. If a book is not authored by its alleged author, it lacks the authority that the imputed author bore. It is, on those grounds, "rejected."

CONCLUSION: THE USE OF FORGERY IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS

One passage in Tertullian is sometimes cited to support the idea that it was an acceptable practice in antiquity for a disciple to publish a book in the

name of his teacher.[78] This, however, is a complete misreading of Tertullian's point. What he says is this: "That which Mark produced is stated to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. Luke's narrative also they usually attribute to Paul. It is permissible for the works which disciples published to be regarded as belonging to their masters."[79]

Contrary to the common interpretation of this passage, Tertullian is not referring to pseudepigraphic practices, but to the authority that lay behind the canonical Gospels. That is to say, Tertullian is not indicating that Mark published his Gospel by calling it the Gospel of Peter, or that Luke published the Gospel of Paul. Each Evangelist wrote—in Tertullian's view—in his own name, but with the authority of another. The passage is thus of no relevance to the question of pseudepigraphy, let alone to the pseudepigraphic practices of the philosophical schools.

So too, Baum claims that since Justin Martyr refers to the Gospel of Mark as the Memoirs of Peter (Dial. 106.3), he considered it acceptable to publish under the name of one's teacher: the book's contents go back to Peter and are authoritative on those grounds.[80] This too is flawed reasoning. For one thing, P. Pilhofer has made a convincing case that Justin is not referring to canonical Mark at all, but to the Gospel of Peter (Justin never refers to the Gospel of Mark by name).[81] Beyond that, we have no evidence to suggest that the Second Gospel was ever circulated under Peter's name. If Justin is referring to it, he is describing it, not naming it. This is not at all the same as a writing claiming to be written by Socrates that was instead produced by a later follower. So too Origen's comment that Hebrews can be accepted as Pauline by those who want to do so, even though it was not written by Paul, because its views are consonant with Paul's. Here again we are not dealing with a book that *claims* to be written by Paul which can be accepted as Pauline, even though Paul did not write it. Hebrews is anonymous.

Forgery involves false authorial claims. Contrary to what is often said, the practice was not accepted, so far as we can tell, even within the philosophical schools—except, perhaps, by the people who practiced it, to whom we will return at the end of this chapter. Critics of the ancient world, however, found the practice objectionable. That is why they are so invested in knowing who actually wrote what. If it did not matter whether the book was written by a follower of Pythagoras or of Hippocrates or of Socrates,

there would have been no reason for critics to invest so much effort in engaging in their critical investigations.

We know how falsifiers of philosophical texts were sometimes treated, as they tried to put their own words on the pens of their revered teachers: Athenodorus was removed from his duties in the Pergamum Library for "correcting" the writings of Zeno.[82] And we know how plagiarists were sometimes treated in the schools: Empedocles was forbidden access to the lectures of Pythagoras.[83] The reason for these attitudes is patent. Ancient readers of texts were widely concerned to know who the actual authors were. That, as Speyer repeatedly reminds us, was the entire reason for the extensive practice of Echtheitskritik.

It was, to be sure, acceptable to publish lecture notes in the name of the teacher who gave the lectures. This is what Arian did with the Discourses of Epictetus, and what some of the followers of both Hippocrates and Pythagoras did. But to write one's own work and to claim that it was the work of another—even a beloved teacher—was not acceptable. Such works were classified as νόθα.

To Establish the Validity of One's Views

There is one factor that ties together most of the motivations discussed so far, and I give it here as a final category even though in fact it appears to have broad application. Forgers typically produced writings in the name of others in order to establish the validity of their own views. As discussed earlier, the name of an author could carry authority. An author whose name carried no authority would sometimes claim a name that did.

This understanding of a forger's motivation comes to be clearly stated both within our period and afterward, never more so than in the sixth-century Christian Neoplatonist David in his comments on the writings of Porphyry: "When someone is unimportant and insignificant, and he wants his writing to be read, he writes in the name of an ancient and influential person, so that through that one's influence he can get his writing accepted."[84] Porphyry himself, as we have seen, indicated that this was what motivated the authors of the pseudo-Pythagorean writings. Aulus Gellius concurred with respect to a different instance: "Many fictions of this

kind seem to have been attached to the name of Democritus by ignorant men, who sheltered themselves under his reputation and authority."[85]

Augustine cites this as the reason for the production of an anti-Christian letter embracing magical practices in the name of Christ himself:

> And it is quite possible that either the enemies of the name of Christ, or certain parties who thought that they might impart to this kind of execrable arts the weight of authority drawn from so glorious a name, may have written things of that nature under the name of Christ and the apostles.[86]

So too in the one instance we have from late antiquity of a Christian detected in the act of forgery, Salvian of Marseilles, who indicates that had he written the book *Ad Ecclesiam* in his own name, rather than in the name of Timothy, no one would have paid it any heed. And so he "wisely selected a pseudonym for his book for the obvious reason that he did not wish the obscurity of his own person to detract from the influence of his otherwise valuable book." Or, as he then says, "For this reason the present writer chose to conceal his identity in every respect for fear that his true name would perhaps detract from the influence of his book, which really contains much that is exceedingly valuable."[87]

The same motivation is explicitly attested for the analogous case of textual falsification, in which one's own words are claimed to be the words of another; and so Rufinus indicates that heretics altered the writings of faithful Christian authorities: "By this means, of course, the assertion of the man's own heresy was more easily advanced under the names of all the most learned and renowned among the ecclesiastical writers in view of the fact that some brilliant men among the Catholics appeared to have thought likewise."[88] Similarly, some heretics tried to pass off a "false teaching" of Tertullian on the Holy Spirit by inserting his tractate on the Trinity, unnamed, into a collection of the writings of the impeccable Cyprian: "The result was that the heretics found a way of gaining credit for their perfidy by means of the authority of such a great man."[89]

Within Christian circles there seems to be no reason to doubt that the need for authority—in particular, apostolic authority—is what motivated most forgers to practice their craft.[90] That the apostles were unique

authorities is evident from the earliest postapostolic times, for example in Ignatius, himself no mean authority, who could nonetheless tell his readers in Tralles: "But I have not thought that I, a condemned man, should give you orders like an apostle."[91] Later it was seen that apostolic books alone could carry Scriptural authority, as indicated by the Muratorian Fragment at the end of the second century, by Origen soon thereafter, and throughout our period, up to its end with Augustine.[92] The importance of apostolic writings for establishing Christian doctrine can be seen in a myriad of places throughout our literature; as just one example we might take the words of Jerome about the virginity of Mary: "That God was born of a virgin we believe, because we read [that it was so]. That Mary was married after she gave birth we do not believe, because we do not read [that it was so]" (Natum deum esse de virgine credimus, quia legimus. Mariam nupsisse post partum non credimus, quia non legimus; *Adv. Helv*. 19).

Small wonder, then, that forgers wrote so many Gospels, epistles, apocalypses, and other works in the names of apostles. Among the names that carried authority, theirs carried the greatest authority of all. But they were not the only authority figures of the early church: Ignatius, Origen, Augustine, and Jerome themselves carried some weight, and so it is no surprise that forgers penned writings in their names as well—and in the names of others, whenever deemed appropriate. The issue was authority, and authority was indelibly linked to the names of authors.

TECHNIQUES

Forty years ago Wolfgang Speyer made a tantalizing claim that remains no less true today: "The history of literary gullibility has yet to be written."[93] Still, despite the astounding credulity of readers—modern as well as ancient—forgers have always made efforts to cover up the traces of their deceit. In many instances, it is simply enough for a forger to claim to be someone other than who he is. Anyone in antiquity who came across a letter of Paul addressed to a church (in Thessalonica, in Ephesus, in Colossae, etc.) naturally thought that Paul had written the letter, unless there was a glaring mistake that indicated otherwise. The forger's craft involved making sure there were no such mistakes: anachronisms, inconsistencies, or gaffes. But more than that, many, possibly most, forgers went out of their way to make

their work believable. Some forgers, of course, were more skilled at deceit than others. The following are some of the ploys they typically used.

Imitation of Style

A good forger who wanted his readers to assume that he really was who he said he was tried to imitate the writing style of the author he was claiming to be. The ability to effect imitation was all part of a rhetorical education in ethopoeia, as Cribiore and many others have noted.[94] Not all forgers were good at it, and some apparently did not even make the effort. This was possibly the case with the famous incident recounted by Galen in *De propriis libris*, where an amateur scholar informed a dupe that the book in question was not by Galen, simply on the basis of the style of the first two lines. Caveat emptor. But most forgers almost certainly did their best, often with spectacular success. It took many centuries for anyone to realize that the writing style of Ephesians was not that of Paul.

We have only one instance from antiquity in which a forger actually acknowledges what he has done (not counting Salvian, who does not explicitly admit his guilt). This is the second century CE Mithridates, who forged a cover letter for a second edition of the letters of the general Brutus —from three centuries earlier—explaining why he himself had produced pseudepigraphic responses from the recipients of the various missives.[95] Among other things, Mithridates claims that in producing the letters he has tried to replicate the plausible contents of what they would have written and to have done so in an appropriately imitative style. But he admits it was not easy: "how difficult it turns out [to be] to contend with another person's skill when it is hard even to keep up one's own!"[96]

Verisimilitudes

In addition to using a familiar name and trying to imitate style, forgers would typically insert verisimilitudes in order to ground yet further the plausibility of their writings. As we will see when we turn to the Pastoral epistles, proponents of authenticity have long maintained that the personal touches that pervade 2 Timothy are the clearest indication that this book (and, often, by implication, its two companions) was actually written by

Paul. Why would a forger bother to remind his recipient of their past relationship in such intimate detail? "I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you.… I remember your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives on in you" (1:3–5). Why would a forger tell a feigned recipient to be sure to "bring the cloak I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, and especially the parchments" (4:13)?

For scholars of forgery, the answer is obvious. A forger would invent such verisimilitudes precisely in order to convince the reader that he is who he says he is. This has been shown beyond any doubt in a now-famous article by Norbert Brox, "Zu den persönlichen Notizen der Pastoralbriefe,"[97] which demonstrates that "personal notes" are a standard ruse of the forger. Brox's position has been strengthened by further researchers, such as Lewis Donelson, who appeals to the forged letters of Plato, especially letters 12 and 13, in support:

> The particular genre of the pseudepigraphical letter displays in abundance the exact type of deception we find in the pastorals. The careless references to mundane affairs of daily life, the specific requests for ordinary and seemingly insignificant objects to be delivered, and even the attempt to display personal feelings are all fully documented in other letters.[98]

First-Person Narratives

One particular method of verisimilitude involves the use of first-person narrative, in which an author not only claims to be someone other than who he is, but also narrates events as a personal participant. We have already seen this ploy at work, for example in the canonical non-pseudepigraphic forgery, Ecclesiastes, where the author provides "autobiographical" discussions as King Solomon, and in the embedded forgery of the Ascension of Isaiah. It was also used in the earlier apocalypses, such as Daniel and Enoch, as well as in apocalypses of the Christian tradition such as those of Paul and Peter. It can be found in other narrative accounts too, such as the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter or the Gospel of Peter, or in narratives embedded in other sorts of texts, as in 2 Peter's first-person

"recollection" of the transfiguration. The value of the first-person narrative is that it makes the writer an authority not only because of his name but also because of his firsthand experiences. This was clearly recognized, yet again, by Speyer:

> First person narrative and eye-witness report immediately inspire the belief in the hearer that the narrator has himself experienced that which he recounts. Such first-person narration and eyewitness report are practically characteristic of miracle stories and liars' tales. First-person narrative appears no less frequently in forgeries, frequently in conjunction with a false authorial claim.[99]

Discovery Narratives

An even bolder ploy was used by some forgers in order to explain why it is that a writing by an ancient author was not widely known by earlier readers. The reason: the book was hidden and discovered only in recent times.

Possibly the most famous instance among pagan writings is the account of the Trojan War allegedly written by a participant, Dictys of Crete, a companion of Idomeneus, widely read as authentic throughout the Middle Ages. The Preface of the account, by Lucius Septimius, indicates how the book came to be uncovered, through pure serendipity.

> After many centuries the tomb of Dictys at Cnossos (formerly the seat of the Cretan king) collapsed with age. Then shepherds, wandering near the ruins, stumbled upon a little box skillfully enclosed in tin. Thinking it was treasure, they soon broke it open, but brought to light, instead of gold or some other kind of wealth, books written on linden tablets. Their hopes thus frustrated, they took their find to Praxis, the owner of that place. Praxis had the books transliterated into the Attic alphabet and presented them to the Roman Emperor Nero.[100]

The author of the account then indicates that he has translated the books into Latin, thus explaining both how they have mysteriously now appeared

and why they are not circulating in a form of ancient Greek. The reality is that the entire set of books, preface and all, were forged.[101]

We have already seen a comparable account in the Pythagorean writings falsely claiming to be written by none other than the second (legendary) king of Rome, Numa, as reported by both Livy (*History of Rome*, 40, 29) and Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, 13, 84–87). Livy indicates that the "discovery" was made in 181 BCE in a field under construction. Workers uncovered two large stone chests with lids fastened by lead. On them were inscriptions in Latin and Greek. One chest was said to be the sarcophagus of Numa Pompilius; the other was said to contain his books. There was no trace of the body in the one chest, but the other contained two bundles tied with waxed rope, each containing seven books, "not merely whole, but looking absolutely fresh" (non integros modo sed recentissima specie; *History of Rome* 40.29).[102]

Seven of these books dealt with pontifical law (of which, by tradition, Numa was the author); the seven in Greek dealt with "a system of philosophy which might have been current at that time" (septem Graeci de disciplina sapientiae quae illius aetatis esse potuit). Valerius Antias indicates that "they were Pythagorean, confirmation of the common belief, which says that Numa was a pupil of Pythagoras, being arranged by a plausible invention." As the books circulated, officials began to be worried about them; the praetor urbanus, Quintus Petilius, thought that a good portion of what was in them could be seen as subversive of religion: pleraque dissolvendarum religionum esse. After consultation he decided to have them publicly burned.

Livy is not explicit about the authenticity of the books, but Pliny clearly suggests they were forged. The reason for thinking so: as an authority from the time of the alleged discovery pointed out, it was difficult to believe that books could have lasted so long without deteriorating.

These pagan examples have their clear counterparts in the best-known discovery narrative of Christian writings, the Apocalypse of Paul. The visions of Paul are introduced with this validation:

> In the consulship of Theodosius Augustus the younger and Cynegius, a certain nobleman was then living in Tarsus, in the house which was that of Saint Paul; an angel appeared in the night

> and revealed it to him, saying that he should open the foundations of the house and should publish what he found; but he thought that these things were dreams.
>
> But the angel coming for the third time beat him and forced him to open the foundation. And digging he found a marble box inscribed on the sides; there was the revelation of Saint Paul, and his shoes in which he walked teaching the word of God. But he feared to open that box and brought it to the judge; when he had received it, the judge, because it was sealed with lead, sent it to the emperor Theodosius, fearing lest it might be something else; when the emperor had received it he opened it, and found the revelation of Saint Paul, a copy of which he sent to Jerusalem and retained the original himself.[103]

As should be clear from these sundry examples, discovery narratives functioned not only to explain the long-absence of a book or set of books, but also to establish their authoritative credentials. In many instances the "discovery" is a result of divine intervention. This was the case as well, for example, with the "discovery" of bronze tablets by Alexander, Lucian's "False Prophet."[104] These tablets, which were planted by Alexander himself, indicated that Asclepeius and his father Apollo were planning to take up residence in Abonoteichus, the location of Alexander's soon-to-be-established faux oracle (*Alexander the False Prophet*, 10).

Lucian was not the only one who recognized how a discovery narrative could serve as a ploy. We also have Cicero's scathing comments on the "discovery" of lots as a means of divination. Cicero was quite forthright in his own opinion of the practice: "And pray what is the need, do you think, to talk about the casting of lots? It is much like playing at morra, dice, or knuckle-bones, in which recklessness and luck prevail rather than reflection and judgement."[105] But those who justified the use of lots claimed divine authorization, from a standard discovery narrative:

> According to the annals of Praeneste Numerius Suffustius, who was a distinguished man of noble birth, was admonished by dreams, often repeated, and finally even by threats, to split open a flint rock which was lying in a designated place. Frightened by the visions

> and disregarding the jeers of his fellow-townsmen he set about doing as he had been directed. And so when he had broken open the stone, the lots sprang forth carved on oak, in ancient characters. The site where the stone was found is religiously guarded to this day. It is hard by the statue of the infant Jupiter, who is represented as sitting with Juno in the lap of Fortune and reaching for her breast, and it is held in the highest reverence by mothers.[106]

At other times discovery narratives were used to justify or explain political actions as foretold by a divine source (Suetonius, *Julius* 81 and *Galba* 9, 2). We are fortunate to have a full study of the phenomenon, covering these and a host of other related issues, in another important contribution by Wolfgang Speyer.[107]

Warnings Against Forged Writings

An equally clever, if less elaborate, ruse occurs in forgeries that warn their readers against reading forgeries. Who would suspect a forger of condemning his own practice? Such warnings occur occasionally in Christian writings; in these contexts, the warning is invariably directed against the forgeries of "false" teachers, as opposed to the writer who issues the warning, who sees himself, of course, as representing the truth. As already mentioned, we have a fairly elaborate example near the end of our period in the Apostolic Constitutions:

> We have sent all these things to you, that you may know our opinion, what it is; and that you may not receive those books which obtain in our name, but are written by the ungodly. For you are not to attend to the names of the apostles, but to the nature of the things, and their settled opinions. For we know that Simon and Cleobius and their followers, have compiled poisonous books under the name of Christ and of His disciples, and do carry them about in order to deceive you who love Christ, and us His servants. And among the ancients also some have written apocryphal books of Moses, and Enoch, and Adam, and Isaiah, and David, and Elijah,

> and of the three patriarchs, pernicious and repugnant to the truth. (6.16)[108]

Later in the text the forger issues a more severe warning: "If any one publicly reads in the Church the spurious books of the ungodly, as if they were holy, to the destruction of the people and of the clergy, let him be deprived" (8.47.60).

Also as we have seen, a similar ploy appears already near the beginning of the period of our concern, in 2 Thess. 2:2. Here an author falsely claiming to be Paul warns against a letter "as if by us." An analogous concern is expressed by the forger of the Epistula Petri and the Contestio of the Pseudo-Clementine literature, whose false author warns his ostensible reader to protect his writings against falsifications.

Material and Literary Prophylaxes

Orthonymous writings sometimes employed forms of material and literary prophylaxis to assure their readers of their authenticity. Not surprisingly, forgers occasionally took the cue and inserted such forms of protection in their own works as a subterfuge. In the documentary realm we learn from Suetonius that Nero made provisions for the protection of wills: "It was in his [Nero's] reign that a protection against forgers (adversus falsarios) was first devised, by having no tablets signed that were not bored with holes through which a cord was thrice passed."[109] Sometimes authenticity was "guaranteed" by a sign or seal, as when Augustine indicates in Letter 59: "I have sent this letter sealed with a ring which has a head of a man looking to one side."[110] At other times the wording of a writing itself was to be taken as a sign of authenticity, as in the thirteenth letter of Plato, widely thought to be forged: "Plato to Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, Wishes well-doing. Let this greeting not only commence my letter but serve at the same time as a token that it is from me" (σύμβολον ὅτι παρ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν).[111] Something similar occurs in 2 Thessalonians, where some interpreters have thought that the author doth protest too much: "The greeting is in my own hand—the hand of Paul—which is a sign in my every epistle; this is how I write" (3:17).

Authors who wanted to implement a more sophisticated form of prophylaxis would sometimes resort to the use of embedded acrostics. Dionysius of Halicarnassus indicates that the acrostic was the mark of the pagan Sybilline oracles. After the collection of oracles was burned in the fire of 83 BCE, the Roman senate sent out envoys to collect copies from various places, especially Erythrea in Asia. But not all those collected were judged authentic. As Dionysius indicates: "Some of these are found to be interpolations among the genuine Sibylline oracles, being recognized as such by means of the so-called acrostics. In all this I am following the account given by Terentius Varro in his work on religion."[112]

A later Christian forger accordingly followed suit and produced at least part of what is now book 8 of the Oracula Sibyllina with an elaborate acrostic that celebrated its own theme. The first letters of lines 217–50 produce the words ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ. Acrostics could perform a variety of functions in forged works, as we saw at the outset with the mischievous Dionysius the Renegade and his pseudo-Sophoclean *Parthenopaeus*.

Confounding Through Intercalation

As a final technique of authentication, I might mention the practice of inserting forged material into writings judged to be authentic, in order to establish credentials through association. We have seen a comparable ploy with respect to the treatise of Tertullian on the Trinity, which according to Rufinus (*De adult. libr. Origen*) was inserted into a manuscript that otherwise contained the authentic letters of Cyprian, in an attempt to validate Tertullian's (discredited) views of the Holy Spirit. In this case, the Tertullian work was not forged; by leaving off the author's name, however, the culprit(s) managed to pass the work off as that of a respected and unquestioned authority.

Similar tricks were used by other pagan and Christian forgers. And so, for example, it is widely held that the epistles of Plato—most of them forged—acquired their standing by being placed in a corpus that contained, as well, writings that were authentic. And the six forged letters of the Long Recension of Ignatius were intermingled with the authentic seven, which were themselves interpolated by the forger of the six. In both these

instances the perpetrators were remarkably successful; their handiwork was not uncovered until relatively modern times.

THE QUESTION OF INTENT

At the outset of this chapter I stressed the importance of differentiating between an author's intention and her motivation. Intention involves what an author wants to accomplish; motivation involves her reasons for wanting to accomplish it. There were numerous motivations that drove ancient authors to produce forgeries. In virtually every instance, however, their intention was the same. It was to convince their readers that they were the person they claimed to be. Their intention, in other words, was deceit.[113]

Many scholars have argued otherwise, maintaining that no deceit was involved in the production of literary pseudepigrapha. This view flies in the face of the convincing arguments of such older scholars as J. S. Candlish and Frederik Torm, the latter of whom could write already some eighty years ago that the idea that pseudonymous writings were widely seen in antiquity simply as a literary form is a "modern invention."[114] The intervening years, regrettably, have seen no shortage of scholars who have subscribed to this "modern invention" of the notion of a literary forgery not meant to deceive its readers. Most of these scholars are experts in religion, and specifically in the New Testament. Their own intentions are in most instances clear: to absolve the authors of ancient forgeries of any guilt involved with lying and deception. All are heirs of the discredited scholars that Torm had in mind, such as the nineteenth-century J. Bernays: "Pagans, Jews and Christians have made use of the same [literary form]—one with greater, the other with lesser skill, but all without experiencing even the slightest scruple. This appeared to them to be a mere game of hide and seek, in which one deemed neither oneself nor another as a true forger."[115] In the English world some such views were expressed repeatedly, for example in the classic work on the Pastorals by P. N. Harrison: The author "was not conscious of misrepresenting the Apostle in any way; he was not consciously deceiving anybody; it is not, indeed, necessary to suppose that he did deceive anybody."[116]

Even though such views have long been discredited by scholars of ancient forgery, they continue to live on among Neutestamentlers, in part,

no doubt, because those in the guild rely on the work of others in the guild, and do not as a rule read widely outside of it, for example in the work of scholars of ancient forgery. And so, for example, we find in a recent introduction to the New Testament by P. Achtemeier, J. Green, and M. Thompson a repetition of the old chestnut: "Pseudonymity appears to have been primarily a literary technique, and not one meant to deliberately deceive its readers."[117] Or writing in the wake of his student David Meade,[118] James Dunn can assert that an ancient pseudepigrapher standing in a(nother author's) tradition "could present his message as the message of the originator of that stream of tradition, because in his eyes that is what it was.… There was no intention to deceive, and almost certainly the final readers were not in fact deceived."[119]

Similar views are expressed by commentators who want to insist that New Testament pseudepigrapha are "transparent fictions"—meaning that the readers were meant to see through them and in fact did see through them, so that no deception was involved. This is R. Bauckham's claim with respect to 2 Peter: "Petrine authorship was intended to be an entirely transparent fiction."[120] Even as good a scholar as Luke Timothy Johnson can write with approbation: "Later scholars [i.e., after Schleiermacher] became more sophisticated about pseudonymity, recognizing that it was both prevalent in antiquity and often a transparent fiction that did not seek to deceive."[121] Such views are virtually ubiquitous among New Testament commentators.[122]

Scholars who have considered the early Christian pseudepigrapha not in a cultural vacuum, however, but in relation to the broader phenomenon have, as a rule, taken an opposite stand. In his presidential address to the SBL, for example, Bruce Metzger asked the rhetorical question: "How can it be so confidently known that such productions 'would deceive no one'? Indeed if nobody was taken in by the device of pseudepigraphy, it is difficult to see why it was adopted at all."[123] The problematic notion of a "transparent fiction" was more carefully exposed, recently, by Annette Merz:

> The basic problem with this assumption of a transparent pseudepigraphy in ancient Christianity is that neither in the texts themselves are there any kinds of signals to the implied reader that

> allow us to discern a consciousness of this supposed genre, nor do we encounter pointers in other sources to such an attitude on the part of recipients.[124]

That deception was involved in the production of forgeries is the firm and emphatic conclusion of all the major studies of forgery, for example, those of Speyer, Brox, Grafton, and Baum. And for good reasons, as we will see. More representative of this less-apologetic perspective is the clear-headed recent statement of Harry Gamble: "It is undeniable, however, that irrespective of context, genre, or motive, pseudonymous writings are in their very nature deceptive, misleading the reader about the identity of the author."[125] Recall the words of the greatest modern scholar of forgery, Wolfgang Speyer: "Each forgery feigns a state of affairs that does not correspond to actual events. In this vein, forgery belongs to the realm of lie and deceit."[126]

Why then have scholars, especially New Testament commentators who have not looked at the broader phenomenon (and who, as a rule, do not cite any evidence), said otherwise? It is hard to escape the characteristically trenchant conclusion drawn by Anthony Grafton: "The only reason to assume that most earlier forgers were more innocent is our own desire to explain away a disquieting feature of the past."[127]

Reasons for acknowledging that the overriding intention of forgers was to deceive their readers should be quite obvious from everything that has been said over the past two chapters. How else can we make sense of the motivations that drove forgers to produce their works in the first place, the techniques they used to avoid detection, and the reactions they incurred when detected? How else can we explain the pains that orthonymous authors took to assure their readers that their writings were authentic and the widespread exercise of criticism by scholars wanting to detect and declare which works were orthonymous and which spurious?

With respect to motives: if forgers could make money for the production of "authentic" writings of Euripides or Plato, who would pay if the works were known to be forged? If a forgery was used to authorize an oracle or some other religious institution, who would be persuaded if the authority did not write the authorization? If a forgery was produced as an apologia—for example of the Jewish or Christian religion on the pen of an ancient

pagan prophetess—who would be convinced if it was known to be the work of a later author simply claiming to be someone he was not? If a forgery was produced in the name of a famous person in order to defame his character, as in the case of the fifty obscene letters forged by Diotimus in the name of Epicurus, how could they obtain their desired result if no one thought they were orthonymous? And on and on. None of the motivations for producing forgeries makes sense if they were transparent fictions. And so L. Donelson can categorically state: "No one ever seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know of a single example."[128]

Moreover, if deceit were not involved, it is well nigh impossible to explain the techniques forgers used in order to pass their work off as someone else's. Not only would the competent forger claim to be another person; he would also try to imitate the style of the person's writing and introduce verisimilitudes into the writing. He sometimes might include a discovery narrative to explain why the writing was not widely known before. He might warn his readers against those who forge writings in his name. He might introduce various prophylaxes into his account to assure his reader that it is genuine—seals, signs, acrostics, and the like. If he expected his reader to see through his ploy, why go to all the trouble? So too orthonymous writings tried to protect their integrity and to assure their readers by the same means. Why would this be necessary if forgeries were transparent? Why bother to protect what needs no protection?

And if no one was deceived, why are the reactions to forgers consistently negative and often harsh? Why do we have accounts of forgers being maligned, attacked, slurred, exiled, and murdered for their efforts—if no one was deceived and no one, frankly, cared? And why would ancient literary scholars need to go to all the bother of exposing forgeries and deciding for their readers which works circulating under an author's name were genuine and which were not, if no one was deceived?

All of the evidence points in the same direction. Forgers meant to deceive their readers. And they very often succeeded. So often did they succeed that in many instances—not just from early Christianity, but certainly at least from there—forgeries have not been detected until the modern period.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR FORGERY: THE NOBLE LIE

Forgery therefore involved literary deception. For nearly as long as there have been forgers there have been critics trying to expose forgeries, as we will see in greater detail shortly. Forgery was not an acceptable practice in the ancient world, any more than other forms of lying and deception were acceptable practices. Why then did forgers engage in their craft? Here I am not asking the question of motivation, which I have already addressed, but the question of self-justification. Forgers engaged in a culturally despised activity. Some of these forgers—as we can assume, for example, within much of the Christian tradition—were proponents of traditional moral values. So how did they explain to themselves what they did? This is a topic to which we will return at greater length at the end of our study, when we query specifically why the Christian forgers did what they did, or at least how they justified their actions to themselves.

The psychological question can never, of course, be answered in any definitive way, as we have no access to the inner mental and emotional processes of our anonymous forgers. We know very little about these people. Among other things, we do not even know their names, let alone anything concrete about them. Nonetheless, it may be worth our while to try to situate the activities of forgers in some kind of plausible psychological or, at least, philosophical context, if we are to make sense of the practice in a broader way.

It is much to be regretted that we have such scant traces of forgers' self-reportage.[129] Sometimes appeal is made to Tertullian's discussion of the Acts of Paul, produced by an unnamed presbyter of Asia Minor, who declared that he did it "for the love of Paul" (*De baptismo*, 17). Unfortunately, as we have seen, in this instance we are dealing not with a forgery but with the fabrication of a historical narrative (the author did not claim to be Paul). One author who did admit to producing pseudepigrapha —"Mithridates," who penned pseudonymous epistolary responses to Brutus from those to whom he had addressed letters—regrettably tells us nothing about how he understood what it was he was doing.

The one instance in which we have an ancient forger explain himself is the fifth-century Salvian of Marseille. As we have seen, Salvian refuses to admit guilt but states, as we have seen, that whereas readers should not assign authority to a mere name, he wrote in the name of Timothy because

his own name carried no weight or authority. Salvian claims that he did nothing wrong: the "Timothy" named in the letter was not meant to be the apostolic companion of Paul but a pure pseudonym. He was writing "for the honor of God." This claim, as we have seen, stands in direct tension with Salvian's simultaneous insistence that for the book to be read it needed to be produced in the name of an authority. In any event, Salvian carefully avoids any admission of guilt, and if he refuses to acknowledge what he has done, then it is impossible for us to know how he justified it to himself. Possibly Salvian and most other forgers were so conflicted by what they were doing—deceiving others when they believed deceit was wrong—that they were unable even to explain to themselves why they did what they did.

There is no doubt, in any event, that the act of forgery was not just an act of deception but an active act of deception, involving a conscious literary lie. This is clearly recognized by Morton Smith, in his account of Jewish pseudepigrapha, where he states what should be—but regrettably is not always—obvious: even if a forger thought he had good reasons for doing what he did, "these considerations would not alter the fact that he knew he wrote the work, and he knew that the pretended author had not."[130]

In this connection it is important to stress again the difference between fiction and forgery. Antiquity had its own forms of writing that correspond roughly to our notion of fiction, and which were recognized as such, even if there continue to be debates among scholars about the nature of ancient fiction in relation to genres today.[131] But in a world of retold myths, epic poems, novels, and satires (cf. Lucian's "True Story") there was—even there—a tacit agreement between an author and a reader in which the requirement of factual reporting was suspended. As Michael Wood helpfully indicates, "Fiction is pure invention, any sort of fabrication. It is invention which knows it is invention; or which knows *and says* it is invention; or which, whatever it knows and says, *is known* to be invention."[132] The reports of forgery, on the other hand, consistently show that there was no agreement between author and reader for the assumption of a false name.[133]

There is no need for me at this stage to provide a lengthy evaluation of the ancient discourses on lying and deceit.[134] This is a matter to which I will return at the conclusion of our study. Suffice it to say, at this stage, that there was not one opinion about what lying was and under what

circumstances it was acceptable. When Augustine wrote his two famous treatises on lying—the two most famous discussions from all of Christian antiquity—he staked out clear and precise positions both on what constituted a lie (a fissure between thought and utterance that is evident to the speaker in an act of speaking undertaken precisely with the intent of creating the fissure) and when telling a lie was admissible (never, under any circumstances whatsoever). But it is important to recall, with Paul Griffiths, the most compelling commentator on Augustine's position, that especially with respect to the latter point, "Few Christians agreed with him when he wrote."[135]

On the contrary there was a widespread notion among thinkers from Socrates to Chrysostom—that is, throughout the entire period of our concern, and considerably prior—that lying was in some circumstances acceptable and not, necessarily, morally condemned. As Jane Zembaty has stated in a study of Plato's Republic, lying or deception was sometimes "justified by more important moral considerations."[136] Plato is known to have advocated the moral justification of lying to one's enemies, and more significant, to have proposed the "noble lie," reserved for the protectors of the state in his Republic, who needed to deceive their subjects in order to promote the greatest possible good. These notions did not originate with Plato, however; Socrates before him, for example, maintained that there were occasions in which lying was both necessary and useful, as when a field general needed to lie to his disheartened troops that reinforcements were near in order to spur them to more valiant efforts, or when a doctor needed to deceive a child in order to convince him to take medication that was good for him. Or so, at least, Xenophon reports in the *Memorabilia* (4, 2, 15–18).

Aristotle agreed with Plato, in Paul Griffiths' words, "damning some lies, excusing others, and recommending yet others (though they did not agree on which lies belong to which category)."[137] Sextus Empiricus showed that later Stoics accepted Plato's view (*Adv. Mathematicos*), and by our period the idea had become a commonplace, as seen in its reappearance, in appropriately modified forms, in such widely disparate sources as Quintilian ("Is not this another case where the orator will not shrink even from lies, if so he may save one who is not merely innocent, but a

praiseworthy citizen?")[138] and Heliodorus ("For lying is good whenever it benefits those who speak but does no harm to those who hear").[139]

Christian authors could and did appeal to numerous instances from Scripture itself in order to justify their own practices of lying and deception (as Augustine notes, disapprovingly): the midwives of Exodus 1:15–22, who protected the Hebrew babies from the unjust wrath of Pharaoh; Abraham and Isaac, who saved their own skins, and the posterity of Israel, by lying about their wives (e.g., Genesis 22); Rahab, who lied about the spies in Joshua 2; Michal, whose deception in 1 Samuel 19:11–18 saved David, the father of the future messiah; Jonathan, who lied to protect him a chapter later; and Jesus himself, who declared he was not going to Jerusalem in John 7, knowing full well that he was; and after his resurrection when he deceived his two followers on the road to Emmaus by assuming a false appearance in Luke 24. Even God is said to have employed deception in Scripture, most famously in Jeremiah's lament, "O Lord, you have deceived me and I have been deceived" (Jer. 20:7).

We do not know, of course, what explanations or excuses forgers made to themselves when they engaged in their acts of conscious deception. But it has plausibly been argued by such scholars as Norbert Brox and Armin Baum that these authors—some of them? most of them?—subscribed to the secular and biblical idea of the "noble lie"—that it was better in some circumstances to practice deception so that a greater good might result. As Brox stresses:

> Notions that those kinds of deceptions, lies, and tricks carried out for the sake of truth and for the effective communication of truth, were expressly permitted were widespread, even if other contemporaries held different views.… Thus we cannot continue to say that all forgers (including Christian ones) must have forged with a troubled conscience.[140]

It is important not to miss the caveat, which cannot be worded strongly enough: "even if other contemporaries held different views." We do not have any evidence of any Christian forger being welcomed and supported for his attempt to achieve a greater good through an act of deception. Some Christians may indeed have approved such practices, just as other

Christians may have approved of lying under oath, stealing, armed rebellion, and murder, if the circumstances required it.

In any event, it is not at all implausible that forgers themselves may have excused their activities to themselves on the ground that they were accomplishing more good than evil in lying about their identity in order to have their point of view heard. One can easily imagine a situation where later followers of Paul, Peter, James, Thomas, or any of the other apostles may have thought that by producing a writing in the name of their teachers —even if several generations or centuries removed—they could deal more effectively with a problem that had arisen or with a situation that had to be addressed. They may well have thought that their writing was very much what their teacher would have said, had he been alive at the time to say it.

But the reality is that other persons with alternative points of view—even precisely the opposite points of view—may well have thought the same things about their own lies and deceits. In either instance the forger may have felt that he engaged in a noble lie and that he was justified in claiming to be someone other than he was. His opponents—conceivably, other forgers—would have felt quite differently, and would have called him a liar and would have labeled his work a νόθα. It is not just that the contents of the works were false; the author himself had tried to deceive his readers about his identity.

CRITERIA OF DETECTION

Throughout these opening chapters we have seen a steady stream of ancient witnesses to a consistent attitude toward forgery. Ancient critics were concerned to know the names and identities of the actual authors of texts; if a writing was suspected of being pseudepigraphic, there was an active interest in knowing who the real author was.[141] In no small measure, this was because of a widely unspoken assumption that the authority of a text resides in the person of the author. At the same time, the identity of the authorizing author was determined to some extent by the details of the text, so that a symbiotic relation existed between text and author: the author authorized the contents of the text, but the contents of the text established the identity of the author.

In an insightful study that effortlessly ranges from antiquity to early modernity, Anthony Grafton has shown that over the centuries the art of forgery grew and changed in relationship to the practice of criticism: the better critics became at determining forgery, the more skilled forgers became, by necessity, in hiding the traces of their deceit. As forgers improved their craft, critics further honed their skills, leading forgers to improve yet further.[142] This escalating scale of deceit and detection does not mean that the essential character of criticism changed over the centuries; as it turns out, the ancients used many of the same methods and appealed to many of the same criteria that critics use today.

Some form of Echtheitskritik goes back at least as far as Herodotus.[143] To be sure, as might be expected, in antiquity, as today, there was considerable gullibility on all sorts of matters, as sometimes lamented by the highly educated elite, such as Pliny the Elder: "It is astounding to what lengths Greek credulity (credulitas) will go; there is no lie (mendacium) so shameless as to lack a supporter."[144] And we have already seen what a modern critic has said about ancient credulity: "an uncritical approach to literature and gullibility of every kind were widespread. The history of literary gullibility has yet to be written."[145] Still, criticism was widely practiced, at least in the rarified atmosphere of the cultural elite. The following were among the criteria explicitly invoked in deciding whether a work was γνήσιος or ψεῦδος.

Style

First and foremost was the matter of literary style. We have already seen Galen's heartfelt approbation of the unnamed amateur critic who uncovered a forgery in Galen's own name simply by perusing the first two lines: οὐκ ἐστιν ἡ λέξις αὕτη Γαλήνου: "this is not the style of Galen." Galen himself was a master of style, and used stylistic considerations to great effect in his massive effort to establish the authentic Hippocratic corpus and to uncover the pseudepigraphic works within it. Just on the Hippocratic *On the Nature of Man*, for example, he is able to show that parts of the work, at least, could not have been forged at the time of the construction of the great Hellenistic libraries—invoking a different criterion—because they are quoted already by Plato, whereas other portions are of more recent vintage:

"Those words must come from recent doctors who did not know the ancient style."[146]

The appeal to style was no Galenic invention. Two centuries earlier stylistic criteria were used to good effect by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. His essay on Dinarchus, the late-fourth-century Athenian orator, is nothing but a discussion of which speeches are genuinely his (γνήσιοι) and which are false, ψεῦδοι or ψευδεπίγραφοι. The grounds he appeals to time and again are stylistic: περὶ τοῦ χαρακτῆρος (ch. 5). Moreover, Dionysius claims that the same criterion can be applied to the works of Plato, Thucydides, Isocrates, or Demosthenes. Each author has a characteristic style, and Dionysius explains in rough form what it is. He then gives reasons for rejecting speeches that he considers "spurious" (ψεῦδοι). Elsewhere, in his evaluation of the writings of Lysias, he argues that the speech about the statue of Iphicrates is "devoid of charm and does not at all display the eloquence of Lysias."

So too Aulus Gellius, in the second century CE, weighed in on the question of the 130 comedies ascribed to Plautus. Noting that Varro had argued, largely on stylistic grounds, that only 21 of the plays were Plautan, Gellius himself considered that several more should be accepted, since they manifested "the characteristic features of his manner and diction" (*Noctes atticae* 3.3). So too Philostratus attacks those who ascribe *Araspes the Lover of Panthea* to Dionysius of Miletus, the great rhetor, indicating that they "are ignorant not only of his rhythms but of his whole style of eloquence, moreover they know nothing of the art of ratiocination."[147] The work instead was written by Celer, "the writer on rhetoric" who was in fact unfriendly with Dionysius from their youth onward, and "was not skilled in declamation" (*Lives of the Sophists* 1.22). So too in his *Life of Apollonius*, (7, 35) he indicates that the enemies of his protagonist had forged a letter (τινα ἐπιστολὴν ἀνέπλασαν) in his name, in which it was stated that Apollonius supplicated Domitian on his knees to be released from his bonds. Philostratus had no difficulty exposing the forgery: "Certainly Apollonius wrote his own will in Ionic; but a letter of his in that dialect I have never come across, though I have made a large collection of them, and I never observed verbosity in one of the Master's letters, since they are all brief and telegraphic."[148]

We have already seen that the educated elite among the early Christians were also adept at establishing authorship on the basis of considerations of style. Origen, for example, recognized that Hebrews could not have been written by Paul (Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25); his contemporary Dionysius of Alexandria showed that the book of Revelation was not authored by the fourth Evangelist (Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25); Jerome pointed out that his predecessors had called into question 2 Peter because of its stylistic differences from 1 Peter (*Vir. ill*. 1); so too he could argue that Theophilus of Antioch was not the author of certain biblical commentaries circulating in his name because they "ascribed to his authorship, which do not seem to me to match the elegance and style of the previous volumes" (*Vir. ill*. 25).

Anachronisms and Other Historical Problems

In addition to stylistic variations, ancient critics were keen to detect anachronisms and other historical problems that made it impossible for texts to have been written by their alleged authors. Returning to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, and his criticism of the speech of Lysias about the statue of Iphicrates: not only does the speech differ stylistically from Lysias' other works, but the statue that it praises was not commissioned until seven years after the orator's death. Another speech in praise of Iphicrates defends its subject's actions during the War of the Allies, which occurred twenty years after Lysias had died. Dionysius argues on stylistic grounds that both speeches had been placed on the lips of Lysias by none other than Iphicrates himself (*Lysias* 12).

Somewhat later, Pliny the Elder speaks of a papyrus letter on display in a temple of Lycia which was allegedly written by Sarpedon during the Trojan war. Pliny objects on the grounds that the manufacture of papyrus in Egypt had not yet begun by the time of Homer (let alone Sarpedon), that in fact Egypt itself did not even exist yet. Since letters at the time were written on leaden tablets and linen cloths, the book cannot be authentic (*Natural History* 13, 88). So too Diogenes Laertius, citing Favorinus' *Memorabilia*, indicates that a speech of Polycrates against Socrates cannot be authentic (μὴ εἶναι ἀληθῆ τὸν λόγον) since it mentions the rebuilding of the walls by Conon, which did not take place until some years after the death of Socrates (*Lives* 2.39).

At other times anachronisms took place on the level of historical linguistics. From Jerome's Prologue to his commentary on Daniel we learn that the enemy of the Christians, Porphyry, argued that the book of Daniel was a forgery that did not belong to the Hebrew Scriptures but was originally composed in Greek. This he deduced from the fact (which he had possibly picked up from Julius Africanus, who used it against Origen) that in the story of Susanna, Daniel uses the clever phrasing ἀπὸ τοῦ σχίνου σχίσαι . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ πρίνου πρίσαι "splitting the mastic tree … sawing the evergreen oak." This kind of alliterative pun obviously works in Greek but not in Hebrew. The book therefore does not go back to a Hebrew prophet of the sixth century BCE, but was composed in his name by a forger living in Hellenistic times.

Christian authors too were concerned with anachronisms and historical problems that called into question the authenticity of writings, both those they cherished and those written to oppose them. As mentioned, Tertullian was compelled to engage in a rather elaborate set of mental gymnastics to explain how Enoch could have written the popular apocalypse circulating in his name, given the circumstance that any such book must have perished in Noah's flood (*De cultu Fem*. 1, 3). Eusebius shows that the pagan Acts of Pilate in circulation during the reign of Maximin Daia could not be authentic, since it places the crucifixion of Jesus in the fourth consulship of Tiberius—that is, in his seventh year, whereas Pilate was not made governor of Judea, according to Josephus, until Tiberius' twelfth year (*H.E*. 1.9). So too, as we have seen, Augustine had no difficulty exposing a letter allegedly written by Jesus to his disciples Peter and Paul, on the ground that Paul was not a follower of Jesus during his earthly ministry (*De cons. evang*. 1, 10).

Internal Inconsistencies and Implausibilities

At other times pseudepigraphic writings were suspect because they contradicted the statements found in orthonymous works of the same author or contained other kinds of implausibilities. Herodotus, for example, doubted the Homeric authorship of the Cyprian poems because their account of the travels of Helen contradicted what was said in the Iliad and the Odyssey (2.117). At the end of our period Augustine cited inconsistencies between the claims of Pelagius made on trial with writings

that allegedly were produced by him years earlier, arguing that the books were likely forgeries in his name produced by others (*De Gest. Pelag*. 1. 19). And as he states with reference to one of his other nemeses, Faustus:

> But even in worldly writings there were well-known authors under whose names many works were produced later, and they were repudiated either because they did not agree with the writings that were certainly theirs or because, at the time when those authors wrote, these writings did not merit to be recognized and to be handed on and commended to posterity by them or their friends. (*Contra faust*. 33.6)

Faustus himself claimed that it was completely implausible that the Gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew the tax collector, given the story of the call of Matthew in chapter 9, which is narrated in the third person:

> Hence, for the present we have allowed ourselves to do an injustice to Matthew until we prove that he did not write this but that someone else wrote it under his name. The indirect form of the same passage of Matthew teaches us this. After all, what does he say? "And when Jesus was passing by, he saw a man sitting at a tax collector's station by the name of Matthew, and he called him. But Matthew immediately got up and followed him." (Matt. 9:9) Who, then, when writing about himself, would say, "He saw a man sitting at a tax collector's station, and he called him, and he followed him," and would not rather say, "He saw me, and he called me, and I followed him." The only explanation is that Matthew did not write this but that someone else wrote it under his name. Even if Matthew wrote this, then, it would not be true, since he was not present when Jesus said this on the mountain. For how much better reason ought we not to believe this, given that Matthew did not write it but that someone else wrote it under the names of Jesus and Matthew? (17.1)

From the Roman world we have the *Apology* of Apuleius, which, as we have seen, mentions the work of his accusers who produced a "forged letter

by which they attempted to prove that I beguiled Pudentilla with flattery. I never wrote it and the forgery is not even plausible" (*Apol*. 87). For one thing, his accusers charge him with using magic to entrance the rich widow: But if he used magic, why would he have needed to write a flattering letter? And how would they have obtained such a letter, which necessarily would have been private, not published?

In addition to these sundry criteria of detection used by a range of critics in antiquity, there were two that appear to be distinctively Christian, driven, at least in part, by theological views that characterized the orthodox understanding of the faith.[149]

Theological Sachkritik

In some early Christian discussions of authenticity there appears a critical logic that might appear peculiar to an outsider observer. The logic is founded on the idea that regnant orthodox views were rooted in the beliefs and preaching of the apostles of Jesus. Any writing that presents contrary positions could not, then, have been written by the apostles.

On one hand, this view is related to criteria mentioned earlier in which anachronisms and implausibilities can demonstrate a work's inauthenticity. Authorship was judged, in part, on contents. But this kind of *Sachkritik* is now given a theological edge. Writings out of line with orthodox Christian thinking cannot be associated with authors who stand at the foundation of the orthodox church. The circularity of the logic may seem all too patent to outsiders: orthodox Christians may have claimed the apostles as their theological forebears, but the historical figures of the apostles themselves were not so easily tamed. Multiple groups of Christians in, say, the second, third, and fourth centuries could all aver apostolic support for their views. In fact, all the groups of Christians that we know about did so, even when their views were diametrically opposed to one another. For one group to judge the authenticity of a writing based on its own set of theological perspectives is simply another way to contend that the apostles "are ours, not yours."

In any event, this kind of theological Sachkritik did occur on occasion, never more forthrightly than in the famous incident involving Serapion and the Gospel of Peter, already recounted.[150] Serapion forbade the future use

of the book because of its occasional "docetic" affirmations. For him, the logic was inexorable. If parts of the book supported a theological perspective that he and his co-religionists found offensive or dangerous, then obviously they could not have originated from the pen of one of Jesus' earthly followers. Unlike the other criteria we have considered, this one is deeply rooted in heresiological concerns. It is theology, not history. Or at least it is theologically driven history.

Eusebius records a comparable debate over the book of Revelation. Some "orthodox" critics had charged that the book could not be by John, or even by a member of the true church, because it supported a sensualist vision of the future kingdom of God, involving "unlimited indulgence in gluttony and lechery at banquets, drinking bouts, and wedding feasts." Their conclusion: the book must have been forged in John's name by a heretic, most likely that nefarious opponent of orthodoxy, Cerinthus (*H.E.* 7.25). In less vitriolic terms Jerome indicates that some of his orthodox colleagues reject the book of Jude because it quotes the apocryphal book of Enoch, something no orthodox writer, obviously, would do (*Vir. ill.* 4).

A comparable logic drives Rufinus to explain how "orthodox" books could contain statements that do not toe the theological line:

> For it is shown in the case of saintly men of old and of those already judged to have been Catholics … that if anything is found in *their* works contrary to the faith of the Church, it should be thought to have been inserted by heretics rather than to have been written by the authors themselves. (*De adult. lib. Orig.*, 8)[151]

Established Patterns of Usage

The second distinctively Christian form of criticism also has analogues in the Greek and Roman worlds. We have seen that discovery narratives were adduced in large measure in order to explain why a work of such importance was not previously known. It had been hidden. Behind the ploy lies a concern of criticism: writings should have an established lineage to be accepted as authentic, rather than appearing just recently.[152]

Christians took this criterion to a new level, in no small measure because it related closely to another cherished notion, that the validity of a doctrine,

practice, or policy was closely tied to its apostolic connections, and that lines of succession for all things orthodox could be traced directly back to the apostles of Jesus themselves. With few exceptions, orthodox Christians maintained that their beliefs represented the earliest forms of the tradition, and that false beliefs were later corruptions of the "original" teachings of the apostles. Clear lines of descent could be traced for both true and false positions.

This idea of succession morphed into an arbiter of literary authenticity, already by the time of Tertullian:

> These are the sort of summary arguments I use when skirmishing light-armed against heretics on behalf of the faith of the gospel, arguments which claim the support of that succession of times which pleads the previous question against the late emergence of falsifiers, as well as that authority of the churches which gives expert witness to the tradition of the apostles: because the truth must of necessity precede the false, and proceed from those from whom its tradition began. (*Adv. Marc*. 4, 5)

By the time of Eusebius the principle had solidified into a criterion. Christian—especially canonical—books are judged authentic largely on the basis of established usage among the orthodox Christian churches. Books that cannot trace a long lineage of use in such circles are suspect. And so, for example, in deciding which of Peter's writings were to be accepted as authoritative, Eusebius indicates that 1 Peter is genuine because it is quoted extensively in the writings of the early church fathers. 2 Peter was not widely known however, although some have found it worthy of a place in Scripture. But the Acts of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter—all attributed to him—are not to be accepted because they were not used by church writers of early days or in Eusebius's own day (*H.E*.3.3).

One might suspect that Eusebius here is concerned only with the question of canonicity, not of authenticity. But these two issues are indelibly linked for him, in no small measure because any writing by the apostle Peter would naturally need to be considered a scriptural authority. This connection is implied throughout his discussion, as when he summarizes his

findings in terms of authorship: “These then are the works attributed to Peter, of which I have recognized only one epistle as authentic and accepted by the early fathers” (ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ὀνομαζόμενα
Πέτρου, ὧν μόνην μίαν γνησίαν ἔγνων ἐπιστολὴν
καὶ παρὰ τοῖς πάλαι πρεσβυτέροις ὡμολογημένην. Note again γνησίαν; 3.3.4). Elsewhere, on some such grounds, Eusebius can dispute the authenticity of James and Jude, considered νόθα precisely because they are not widely mentioned by “ancient” Christian writers (2.23). So too for patently noncanonical books. 2 Clement is not a work of Clement precisely because it is not widely attested in earlier sources; nor are the dialogues of Peter and Apion written in his name since “there is no mention whatever of them by early writers” (3.38).

Augustine in particular stresses both the secular and theological logic of this criterion, in a statement worth quoting at length:

> Were not certain books that were produced under the name Hippocrates, the highly renowned physician, rejected as authoritative by physicians? Nor did a certain similarity of topics and language offer them any help. For, compared to the books that it was clear were really Hippocrates’ books, they were judged inferior, and they were not known at the same time at which the rest of his writings were recognized as truly his. But how is it proven that these books are really his when, compared to them, the books brought forth out of the blue are rejected? How is it proven so that, if anyone rejects this, he is not even refuted but laughed at, except because a series of physicians, from the time of Hippocrates down to the present time and thereafter, has commended them so that to have any doubt about them is the mark of a madman? How do people know that the books of Plato, Aristotle, Varro, Cicero, and other such authors are their works except by the same unbroken testimony of the ages following one upon another?
>
> Many authors have written extensively on the Church’s writings, not, of course, with canonical authority but with some desire to be helpful or to learn. How is it determined who wrote what except by the fact that, in the times in which each author wrote them, he made them known and published them for those for whom he could, and from them they were passed on to future generations, one after

> another, with unbroken knowledge that was quite widely accepted, down to our times, so that, when asked whose book is whose, we do not hesitate what we ought to reply? … Since that is the case, who, then, is blinded by such great madness—unless he has been corrupted by agreeing with the wickedness and fallacies of lying demons—as to say that the Church of the apostles, so faithful and so numerous a harmony of brothers, could not have merited faithfully to transmit their writings to future generations, though the sees of the apostles have been preserved down to the present bishops in an utterly certain line of succession, especially since this is so much the case with any people's writings, whether outside the Church or even in the Church? (*Contra Faust*. 33.6)

The continuous attestation of books from the time of their author gives evidence of their authenticity, even in the case of secular writings. But that is even more the case with Christian writings, transmitted by faithful believers, unaltered over the years, in a way analogous to the famed apostolic succession, in which bishops can trace their lineage through their predecessors back to the apostles of Jesus themselves. With the Christian writings this is not just a matter of historical accident; it is an act of providence.

1. "Der Verzicht auf ein Herausarbeiten der Absichten der Fälscher wäre gleichbedeutend mit dem Verzicht, die Fälschungen zu verstehen. Nur das Motiv erklärt die Fälschung." *Die literarische Fälschung*, p. 9.

2. We have only one writing from our period in which a forger admits to what he did, the letter of "Mithridates" that indicates why he produced pseudepigraphic responses by the addressees of the letters of Brutus (assuming, with Calhoun, that this letter is not itself pseudepigraphic). Unfortunately Mithridates does not explain his motivation. See Robert Matthew Calhoun, "The Letter of Mithridates: A Neglected Item of Ancient Epistolary Theory," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 295–330.

3. On the theoretical problem of establishing authorial intentions—which I am here differentiating from "motives," although obviously some of the hypothetical issues are the same—see p. 30, n. 32.

4. For the works of Salvian, see the edition in the *Sources Chrétienne*, 176, 220. The first English translation of *ad Ecclesiam*, with introduction, was published by A. Haefner, "A Unique Source for the Study of Ancient Pseudonymity," *AThR* 16 (1934): 8–15.

5. I am using the translation of Haefner, "Unique Source"; see also Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan, tr., *The Writings of Salvian, The Presbyter* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1947).

6. See the list of Gennadius, *Catalogus virorum illustrium*, 68, cited by O'Sullivan, *The Writings of Salvian*, pp. 5–6.

7. E.g., Norbert Brox, "Quis ille auctor? Pseudonymität und Anonymität bei Salvian," *VC* 40 (1986): 55–65.

8. Ibid.

9. For the following objections, see David Lambert, "*The Pseudonymity of Salvian's Timothy ad Ecclesiam," StPatr* 38, ed. Maurice Wiles et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 422–28.

0. Ibid.

1. On intention, see p. 30, n. 3.

2. J. C. Fenton, "Pseudonymity in the New Testament," *Theology* 58 (1955): 55.

3. See, e.g., *In Hippocratis de natura hominis commentarium*, Book 2, Proem.

4. *In Hipp. De nat. hom. Comm*. 1. 44, the fuller passage is conveniently quoted in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 224.

5. *In Hipp. De nat. hom, Comm*. 2 pr. See Ann Ellis Hanson, "Galen: Author and Critic," in Glenn W. Most, ed., *Editing Texts, Texte edieren* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 22–53, esp. p. 33.

6. *Mistaken Critic*, 30; translation of A. M. Harmon, *Lucian*, vol. 5; LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

7. Olympiodorus, *Prolegomena;* for text, see Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 238–41.

8. See Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 112, 333; C. W. Müller, "Die neuplatonischen Aristoteleskommentatoren über die Ursachen der Pseudepigraphie," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 112 (1969): 120–26.

9. "Literary Frauds Among the Greeks," pp. 52–74.

0. Suetonius, *Galba*, 9.2

1. Plutarch, *Alexander*, 17.2 (who does not label it a forgery).

2. *Life of Julius*, 81; translation of J. C. Rolfe *Suetonius*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1951). See Wolfgang Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike. Mit einem Ausblick auf Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 71–72.
3. *Life of Augustus* 51; translation of Rolfe in the Loeb.
4. *War* 1.26.3. For a further example involving Antipater, see *War* 1.32.6.
5. See the discussion on p. 66.
6. Among the significant studies, see esp. H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*, ed. by B. C. McGing (London: Routledge, 1988); and John J. Collins, "The Development of the Sibylline Tradition," *ANRW* II. 20 (1987): 421–59. Useful translations are available in Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., OTP (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), vol. 1, pp. 317–472.
7. See further pp. 508–19.
8. For a full study of the patristic attestations, see the now classic study of Bard Thompson, "Patristic Use of the Sibylline Oracles," *RR* 16 (1952): 115–36.
9. *Contra Celsum* 7.56; Translation of Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953).
0. Actually the dates do not work; this must be Onias I (*Ant*. 12, 226f.). Josephus does not call the letter forged.
1. See esp. the discussion of Alfons Fürst et al., *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus*, SAPERE XI (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).
2. For an alternative explanation, that the correspondence is merely a rhetorical exercise from a Christian school, see above, p. 45, n. 35. For fuller discussion see pp. 520–27.
3. For an English translation of the correspondence, see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 413–17.
4. Of even greater importance, as Maria Doerfler has reminded me: the letter serves to elevate the status of the Christian community in Edessa by connecting it directly to the earthly Jesus himself. See the study of the later *Doctrina* in Sidney Griffiths, "The *Doctrina Addai* as a Paradigm of Christian Thought in Edessa in the Fifth Century," *Hugoye* 6.2 (2003).
5. For translations see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 419–557.

6. Some have argued that the imperial rescripts designed to curtail and regulate the persecutions of Christians are best seen as apologetically driven forgeries by Christians (see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 252–55). More recent scholars have found grounds for taking many of the rescripts as authentic. See Denis Minns, "The Rescript of Hadrian," in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), pp. 38–49; and Paul Keresztes, "The Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Christians," *JEH* 22 (1971): 1–18.
7. Translation of W. H. S. Jones, *Pausanias: Description of Greece*. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1918).
8. *Lives* 10, 8; translation of R. D. Hicks *Diogenes Laertius*.
9. *De natura deorum* 1.33; see also Sextus Empiricus, 599; Athenaeus, *Banq*. 8.354.
0. W. Crönert, *Kolotes und Menedemos* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1965), pp. 16–24.
1. Translations of Martial are from Walter C. A. Ker, *Martial: Epigrams* LCL, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968).
2. See also 7.72, quoted on p. 81.
3. Translation of Vincent Hunink in Stephen Harris et al., *Apuleius: Rhetorical Works* (New York: Oxford University, 2001), p. 105.
4. *Life of Apollonius*, 7.35. Translation of F. C. Conybeare, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1912).
5. *Adv. Rufin*. 2.24.
6. "Fälschungen galten als literarische Kampfmittel und wurden mit Gegenfälschungen beantwortet." "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum: Überlegungen zum literarischen und theologischen Problem der urchristlichen und gemeinantiken Pseudepigraphie," *ZTK* 66 (1969): 409.
7. *Lives* 2, 42.
8. See the discussions on pp. 350–58 and 439–45.
9. "Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 359.
0. Margaret MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 8.
1. *Colossians* AB 34B (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 123.

2. “Die Schüler brachten ja mehr oder weniger die Gedanken ihres Lehrers in schriftliche Form, während große Schulhäupter oftmals nur mündlich lehrten. Durch die Verfasserangabe wurde damit der geistige Autor benannt, auf den der Inhalt des Werkes letztlich zurückging. Eine solche Zuschreibung wurde vom antiken Menschen wohl nicht als Fälschung empfunden.” *Das Vermächtnis des Apostels: Die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie im Epheserbrief*, WUNT 2; 99 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), p. 9. For another recent representative of the view, see Angela Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

3. The most recent example of a scholar who presents the view nonproblematically is Richard Pervo, in his otherwise interesting *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), pp. 6–10.

4. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 51–57; Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 71–75. It appears even in studies of Pythagoras himself. Thus David R. Fideler, “Introduction,” in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings Which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy*, compiled and translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1987):

> These writings are attributed to original members of the Pythagorean school which in fact is actually not the case [i.e., they did not actually write them]. This does not mean that these writings are “forgeries” in the modern sense of the word, for it was a fairly common practice in antiquity to publish writings as pseudepigrapha, attributing them to earlier, more renowned individuals. It was probably out of reverence for their master—and also perhaps because they were discussing authoritative school traditions—that certain Pythagoreans who published writings attributed them directly to Pythagoras himself.

It is worth noting that, as with most New Testament scholars, Fideler does not mention any ancient reflections on the phenomenon that have led him to his conclusion, and cites not a single piece of evidence for it.

5. *Epistle* 33, 4. Translation of R. M. Gummere in LCL, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1917–1925).

6. Translation Rolfe in LCL.

7. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 53.
8. "Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie," in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, ed. Jörg Frey et al., p. 177.
9. Unless he is referring to the Hellenistic revitalization of the school, on which see p. 111.
0. Ed. 'Amir al-Najjar (4 vols., Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-'Amma lil-Kitab, 2001), vol. 1, pp. 244–45.
1. "Die Schriften und Fragmente des Pythagoras," *RESupp*. 10 (1965): 843–64; see also idem, *Die Pythagoreer. Religiöse Bruderschaft und Schule der Wissenschaft* (Zurich: Artemis, 1979), 272–73.
2. See Holger Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (Åbo: Åbo Academi, 1961). For collection of these texts see Kenneth Guthrie and Thomas Taylor, *The Pythagorean Writings: Hellenistic Texts from the 1st Cent. B.C.–3d Cent. A.D.*, ed. Robert Navon (Kew Gardens, NY: Selene Books, 1986).
3. *Life of Pythagoras* 29. Translation mine.
4. Ch. 31; translation of John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), p. 203. The translators themselves point out that whereas the claim may have made sense in the early years of the Pythagorean movement (although even here there are questions), "it hardly makes much sense subsequent to the publication of the pseudo-Pythagorean writings." One should press the question even harder: Does Iamblichus have any evidence (or rather is there any evidence) to support his claim? He certainly gives none. It looks instead to be his simple opinion of the matter.
5. Olympiodorus, *Prolegomena*, 13; for Greek text and German translation, see Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 238–43.
6. For example, by Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 22–23.
7. "Der einzige (!), der von einer solchen Praxis berichtet, ist wiederum Jamblichos. Bis dahin hören wir von keinem konkreten Fall, in dem ein Pythagoreer seine Entdeckungen dem Pythagoras zugeschrieben hätte, und wir haben auch keinerlei Hinweis darauf, daß es in seiner Schule solche Tendenzen gibt." *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen*

Pythagoreismus (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), p. 91; exclamation point his.

8. See esp. Thesleff, *Introduction*.

9. "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie," pp. 414–15; see also Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 139–42, and Duff, *Reconsideration*, p. 78.

0. See F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 275 T 11.

1. See Livy 40.29; Pliny *Natural History* 13.84–87; and Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 8.19–20.

2. *Quintilian Inst. Proem. 7*. Translation of H.E. Butler, *Quintilian I*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1920).

3. Epictetus, *Discourses*. Translation of W. A. Oldfather in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1926).

4. On the practice of publishing a philosopher's lecture notes, cf. Angela Standhartinger: "From antiquity too we know that much of what was published in the name of famous men had actually been written down by their students, whether in the form of notes taken at the actual event or as memories thereof after the fact. In the Pythagorean school and even more so in the Epicurean one, everything that was spoken or written by students counted as the intellectual property of the teacher and was frequently published under his name." ("Es war also in der Antike bekannt, daß vieles von dem, was man unter dem Namen berühmter Männer lesen konnte, eigentlich von ihren Schülern und Schülerinnen aufgeschrieben worden war, sei es als Mitschrift, sei es als nachträgliche Erinnerung. In der pythagoräischen Schule und mehr noch in der epikureischen galt alles, was von den Schülerinnen und Schülern gesagt und aufgeschrieben wurde, als geistiges Eigentum des Lehrers und wurde unter dessen Namen an die Öffentlichkeit gebracht"; *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, p. 42). It is not clear where she derives her evidence that this was particularly common in Epicurean circles.

5. The classic study, very much still worth reading, is L. O. Bröcker, "Die Methoden Galens in der literarischen Kritik," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 40 (1885): 415–38. See as well A. Anastassiou and D. Irmer, eds., *Testimonien zum Corpus Hippocraticum*. pt. 2, *Galen; vol. 1 Hippokrateszitate in den Kommentaren und im Glossar* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1997). Scholars today, as both Dale Martin and Zlatko Pleše

have reminded me, generally reject the authenticity of the entire Hippocratic corpus.

6. *In Hipp. Acut. Comment*. 2, 55; Anastassiou and Irmer, pp. 1–3.

7. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 58–59.

8. For example, Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 13.

9. *Adv. Marc*. 4.5.

0. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 60.

1. Peter Pilhofer, "Justin und das Petrusevangelium," *ZNW* 81 (1990): 60–78; the attempted refutation by Thornton is far less persuasive; see Claus-Jürgen Thornton, "Justin und das Markusevangelium," *ZNW* 84 (1993): 93–110.

2. See p. 62.

3. See p. 54.

4. *In Porphyr Isage*. Pr. 1: Translation mine; Greek text in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 214

5. *Attic Nights* 10.12.8. Translation of John C. Rolfe, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978–1984).

6. *Cons Evang*. 1.10.

7. See pp. 94–96.

8. *De adult libr. Orig. 2*. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 125.

9. *De adult libr. Orig. 12*. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 133.

0. Among many others, see, for example, Petr Pokorný, "Das theologische Problem der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie," *EvT* 44 (1984): 486–96.

1. My translation; see *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2003).

2. The author of the Muratorian Fragment refuses to accept the Shepherd as canon in part because it was written by Hermes, the brother of the bishop of Rome, Pius; Origen (*Comm. In Matt* ser. 47, on Matt 24:23–28) indicates that the time of canonical writings was from the beginning of creation (Genesis) to the most recent writings of the Apostles "post quos nullis scripturis ita credendum est sicut illis" (see Baum *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 154–55). Cf. Augustine: "But the books of later authors are distinct from the excellence of the canonical authority of the Old and New Testaments,

which has been confirmed from the times of the apostles through the successions of bishops and through the spread of the churches. It has been set on high, as if on a kind of throne, and every believing and pious intellect should be obedient to it.… But in the works of later authors, which are found in countless books but are in no way equal to the most sacred excellence of the canonical scriptures, the same truth is also found in some of them, but their authority is far from equal" (*Contra Faust*. XI, 5).

3. "Die Geschichte der literarischen Leichtgläubigkeit ist noch nicht geschrieben." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 85.
4. Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2001), pp. 228–30.
5. See Robert Matthew Calhoun, "The Letter of Mithridates: A Neglected Item of Ancient Epistolary Theory," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 295–330. Calhoun summarizes the importance (yet neglect) of this letter in clear terms: "For scholars of the NT and early Christian literature the remarks of Mithridates on the production of pseudepigraphic letters should hold a comparable importance to what Thucydides has to say about the composition of speeches in historical narrative, since both directly address at a theoretical level phenomena that actually occur in Christian texts" (pp. 321–22). Among other things, Calhoun argues that the letter of Mithridates itself is not forged.
6. Translation of Calhoun, "The Letter," p. 303.
7. *BZ* 13 (1969): 76–94; reprinted in Brox, ed., *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdischchristlichen Antike*, pp. 272–94.
8. Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1986), pp. 24–25.
9. Ich-Rede und Augenzeugenschaft veranlassen den Hörer unmittelbar zu dem Glauben, daß der Erzähler das, was er berichtet, selbst erlebt hat.… Die Ich-Rede und die Augenzeugenschaft sind für die Wundererzählung und die Lügenerzählung geradezu kennzeichnend. Nicht weniger oft begegnet die Ich-Rede in Fälschungen, und meist ist sie hier mit der Angabe eines vorgetäuschten Verfassernamens verbunden. *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 51.

00. Translation of R. M. Frazer, *The Trojan War: The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966).
01. See Stefan Merkle, "The Truth and Nothing But the Truth: Dictys and Dares," in G. Schmeling, *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 564–80.
02. For translation, see Evan Sage and Alfred Schlesinger, *Livy History of Rome Book XL–XLII*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1938).
03. Translation of J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
04. See p. 99.
05. Translation of William A. Falconer, *Cicero: De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1935).
06. *On Divination*, 2.85.
07. *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike*.
08. Translation of James Donaldson in *ANF*, vol. 7.
09. *Nero*, 17; translation of J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1935).
10. Translation of Wilfrid Parsons, *Augustine, Letters 1–82;* FC, vol. 12 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1951), p. 300.
11. Translation of R. G. Bury, *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1929).
12. *Roman Antiquities*, 4.62.6. Translation of Earnest Cary, in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1937–1950).
13. On the theoretical problem of intent, see p. 30, n. 3.
14. See p. 79.
15. "Heiden, Juden und Christen haben sich derselben [schriftstellerischen Form] bedient, der eine mit größerer, der andere mit geringerer Gewandtheit, alle aber ohne den leisesten Skrupel zu empfinden; es schien dies ein bloßes Versteckspiel, bei dem man weder sich selbst noch anderen als wirklicher Fälscher vorkam." J. Bernays, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* 1 (1885) p. 250, as cited in Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 5–6.
16. *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, 1921, p. 12.
17. Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, and Marianne M. Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament, Its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids,

MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 560.

18. See pp. 39–42.

19. "The Problem of Pseudonymity," in *The Living Word* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 84.

20. *Jude, 2 Peter* WBC, 50 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), p. 134.

21. *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), p. 57.

22. There is no need to provide an exhaustive list. Martina Janssen names the following as representative (from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries): B. Hegermann, E. Reinmuth, Gerd Theissen, B. S. Easton, H. J. Holtzmann, H.-J. Klauck. A. Vögtle, and others. See Janssen, *Unter falschem Namen*, pp. 182–85.

23. Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL*, 91 (1972): 15–16.

24. "Das Grundproblem dieser Annahme einer offenen Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum ist, dass weder in den Texten selbst irgendwelche Signale an die impliziten Leser zu finden sind, die ein Bewusstsein für diese postulierte Form der Rede erkennen lassen, noch in den sonstigen Quellen Hinweise für eine solche Einstellung auf Seiten der Rezipient Innen begegnen." *Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), p. 198.

25. "Pseudonymity and NT Canon," p. 356.

26. "Jede Fälschung täuscht einen Sachverhalt vor, der den tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten nicht entspricht. Damit gehört die Fälschung in das Gebiet der Lüge und des Betruges." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 3.

27. *Forgers and Critics*, p. 37.

28. P. 11.

29. See the informative discussion of Martina Janssen, "Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie," who, obviously, is more interested in the related question of self-described motivation.

30. "Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Tradition," in *Pseudepigrapha I: Pseudopythagorica, Lettres de Platon, Littérature pseudépigraphique juive*, ed. Kurt von Fritz (Vandoeuvres-Génève: Fondation Hardt pour l'Étude de l'Antiquité Classique, 1972), pp. 206–7.

31. For an argument that nothing that corresponds to our sense of "fiction" existed in the ancient world, see Christopher Gill, "Plato on Falsehood–Not Fiction," in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), pp. 38–87. For further discussion, see pp. 533–34.
32. "Prologue," in Gill and Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, p. xvi. Italics his.
33. Even if Gill were right about ancient "fiction" (see note 131), my characterization would apply. There were some kinds of discourse that were adopted and accepted widely in antiquity—even if they involved narratives and discourses that were not factually true (e.g., epic poems, Platonic Dialogues, historians' speeches, and the like)—because they (1) fulfilled a kind of contract between the author and reader to be what they were and not something else and (2) attempted to convey what was true: philosophical "truth," a "true" representation of what a speaker would have said, a "true" conveyor of a culture's heritage/tradition, etc. Lacking that implicit contract, a "forgery" was widely thought to violate cultural standards, even if the author was trying to convey something that in his view was "true" (e.g., how Paul would have responded if he were faced with Gnostic teachings). Moreover, his views were often rejected as "false" even if they were, in fact, "true" (i.e., the writing is rejected independently of the question of whether Paul really would have responded this way or not).
34. There is, naturally, a sizeable literature. In addition to the essays in Gill and Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction*, the following are among the most useful for understanding key aspects of the Christian tradition: Franz Schindler, "Die Lüge in der patristischen Literatur," *Beiträge zur Geschichte des christlichen Altertums und der byzantinischen Literatur* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969; originally published 1922); Gregor Müller, *Die Wahrhaftigkeitspflicht und die Problematik der Lüge: Ein Längsschnitt durch die Moraltheologie und Ethik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tugendlehre des Thomas von Aquin und der modernen Lösungsversuche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962; among other things, Müller acknowledges that "several fathers of this era consider permissible the 'lie from necessity'" ["einige Väter dieser Epoche die 'Notlüge' für erlaubt halten"] and numbers among them Origen, Didymus, Chrysostom, Jon Cassian, Theodoret, and others); R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture*

(Richmond: John Knox, 1959; Hanson includes comments on divine deception, esp. in Origen's *Homilies* on Jeremiah; see XIX.15 and XX.3); Boniface Ramsey, "Two Traditions on Lying and Deception in the Ancient Church," *Thom*. 49 (1985): 504–33; David Satran, "Pedagogy and Deceit in the Alexandrian Theological Tradition," in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. J. Daly (1992), pp. 119–24 (dealing with Philo, Clement of Alexandria, Origen); and the articles in *JECS* 9 (2009). There is an extensive literature on Augustine in particular, all referred to and surpassed by Paul J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), a lucid, readable, intelligent, and helpful discussion, which embraces Augustine's view that consciously duplicitous speech acts are never acceptable, no matter what, as rooted in Augustine's understanding of the word in relationship to what it means to be human in relationship to God.

35. *Lying*, p. 14.

36. Jane S. Zembaty, "Plato's Republic and Greek Morality on Lying," *JHP* 26 (1988): 531.

37. *Lying*, p. 13.

38. *Institutio Oratio*, 12.1.41. Translation of H.E. Butler in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1929).

39. *Ethiopica*, 1.26.6. Translation mine.

40. "Es gab verbreitete Vorstellungen, nach denen um der Wahrheit und um der wirksamen Vermittlung der Wahrheit willen Täuschung, List und Tricks ausdrücklich gestattet waren, auch wenn andere Zeitgenossen anderer Meinung waren.… Man kann also nicht weiterhin sagen, daß alle Fälscher (auch die christlichen) schlechten Gewissens gefälscht haben müssen." *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 91–92. A comparable notion involves the "antidote" given to heal a disease, as pointed out, based on passages in Plato, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome, by Petr Pokorný, "Das theologische Problem der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie": "The authors of the canonical Christian pseudepigrapha apparently felt justified in their actions primarily by virtue of the notion of fighting fire with fire" (Die Verfasser der kanonisierten christlichen Pseudepigraphen fühlten sich in ihrem Vorgehen offensichtlich vor allem durch die Thesen von dem Gegengift gerechtfertigt).

41. For a relatively full discussion of the use of critical methods to uncover forgery in antiquity, see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 112–28.
42. *Forgers and Critics*, passim.
43. See the earlier discussion on pp. 61–62 and below p. 140.
44. *Natural History*, 8.82. Pliny, however, was not speaking of forgers but of werewolves!
45. "… waren literarische Kritiklosigkeit und Leichtgläubigkeit jedweder Art weit verbreitet. Die Geschichte der literarischen Leichtgläubigkeit ist noch nicht geschrieben." Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 85.
46. See the discussion in Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, p. 19.
47. Translation of Wilmer Wright, *Philostratus*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1952).
48. Translation of Christopher P. Jones, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2005).
49. Speyer overstates the case when he claims: "Christian criticism was dogmatically determined. Their 'Echtheitskritik' (assessments of authenticity) worked almost exclusively with the terms 'orthodox' and 'heretical'" ("Die Kritik der Christen war also dogmatisch bestimmt. Ihre Echtheitskritik arbeitete so fast ausschließlich mit den Begriffen <Rechtgläubig> und <Häretisch>"; *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 201). There were, as we have seen, other criteria used as well. But he does have a point: much of what passed as criticism in early Christian circles was theologically driven.
50. See pp. 90–92.
51. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 130.
52. Galen appealed to this criterion to establish that *De glandibus* was not actually a work of Hippocrates; none of the earlier physicians after the days of Hippocrates mentions it. See the discussion in Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 126.

PART II

Forgery in Early Christian Polemics

CHAPTER SIX

Introduction to Forgery and Counterforgery in Early Christian Polemics

As we turn now to the central focus of this study, the use of literary forgery in early Christian polemics, several points already mentioned need to be returned to prominence. The first and most obvious involves the extent of the phenomenon being considered.

The literary landscape of the first several Christian centuries is littered with falsely attributed and forged writings. Among the twenty-seven books that were later deemed Scripture, only eight are orthonymous; one of these, the book of Revelation, was admitted into the canon only because of a quirk of homonymy. The other seven all stem from the pen of one man. The remaining books are either falsely attributed to early authority figures within the church (the Gospels, Johannine epistles) or forged. A fair critical consensus holds that six of the Pauline letters and the letters of Peter were written by someone other than the apostles claimed as their authors, and that James and Jude were falsely inscribed in the names of Jesus' brothers. A good case can be made that Hebrews is a non-pseudepigraphic forgery, with the hints in the closing meant to indicate that it was written by Paul, even though his name is not attached to it. In what follows I will argue that Acts and 1 John are also best seen as non-pseudepigraphic forgeries, as they too make false authorial claims without naming a specific author.

Outside the New Testament false attributions continue, in such works as 1 Clement and Barnabas, pseudo-Justin *Cohortatio ad Graecos, De monarchia*, and *Oratio ad Graecos*, and pseudo-Tertullian *Adversus omnes haereses*. Forgeries of apocryphal works continue apace throughout the second and third centuries, and indeed on into and through the Middle Ages, with Gospels assigned to such figures as James, Thomas, Matthew, Philip, and Nicodemus, epistles allegedly written, again, by Paul (Laodiceans, Alexandrians, correspondence with Seneca) and Peter (epistula Petri), and apocalypses as well in the names of Peter and Paul. Starting in the third century, "church orders" begin to appear, not merely

claiming to convey the teachings of the apostles, as with the Didache, but actually produced, falsely, in their names, as in the Didascalia Apostolorum and the Apostolic Constitutions. Eventually writings appear in the names of subapostolic authorities, such as the pseudo-Ignatian letters and the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, as well as in the names of respected authorities from within the orthodox community, writings allegedly by Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, many of them produced within the alleged authors' own lifetimes.

We are dealing with a large and complex phenomenon. In the analyses that follow I will be considering some fifty instances of forgery from the first four Christian centuries. How many were actually produced at the time is anyone's guess.

It will be difficult to make sweeping generalities about these forged productions as an undifferentiated group. They were written at different times, in different places, by different authors, for different purposes. But as I will be limiting myself to forgeries that appear to have been generated out of polemical interests, one feature does appear to bind them together. Their authors assumed false names for one chief end: to provide for their views an authority that otherwise would have proved difficult to obtain had they written anonymously or in their own names. These were authors in the throes of controversy, eager to establish their views as both legitimate and authorized. To that end they employed means widely regarded throughout their environment as illegitimate and unauthorized.

Throughout our period orthodox writers regularly and roundly accused heretics of forging documents. We find the charge in our earliest surviving heresiologist, Irenaeus, who, for example, accuses the Cainites of making use of a forged Gospel of Judas Iscariot; at about the same time the Muratorian Fragment denigrates as Marcionite forgeries the "Pauline" letters to the Laodiceans and Alexandrians; and again, from roughly the same time, Serapion of Antioch pronounces the Gospel of Peter pseudepigraphic. At the end of our period Epiphanius maligns numerous forgeries of the heretics, including the seven books of Seth and the Gospel of Eve, not to mention that lascivious Greater Questions of Mary, a book that, as I argued in Chapter One, may have been his very own invention, possibly a case of casting a stone in a glass house.

In some instances one finds warnings not to be led astray by forged documents precisely in documents that are themselves forged. The charge is

found at the very beginning of our period in the canonical work of 2 Thessalonians, which warns its readers not to be misled by a letter allegedly —but not actually—written by Paul. At the end of our period it is found in the Apostolic Constitutions, which warns its readers, in the names of the earthly apostles of Jesus, not to read writings falsely produced in the names of the earthly apostles of Jesus. All the Christian forgeries that warn readers to avoid forgeries are ultimately concerned with "false teachings," in an environment when knowing the "truth" was essential for salvation. This, of course, is one of the disturbing ironies of the early Christian tradition, that those invested in establishing and promoting the truth often did so by lying —in this case by lying about their true identities. They appear to have done so in order to deceive their readers into believing that they were authority figures who could, by their elevated status, establish the contours of the true faith. In short, they promulgated a falsehood in order to promote their understanding of the truth.

Sometimes the forged attacks on "false" teachings appear more subtly, in the phenomenon I am calling "counterforgery." To a certain extent every forgery that counters the views of another person, group, or writing is a counterforgery, and sometimes the term is used by scholars in this weaker sense. More poignantly, sometimes a forgery is used precisely to counter the views set forth in another work that is itself a forgery. It is in this stronger sense that I will predominantly be using the term here. It is not always the case that the forgery being opposed is recognized and named as a forgery—as does happen, however, in both 2 Thessalonians and the Apostolic Constitutions. More commonly it is impossible to know whether the forger realizes that the views under attack are in fact represented in a forged document; these, then, would be unwitting cases of fighting fire with fire.

Internecine conflicts were not the only polemical contexts within which the Christian writers of the first four centuries worked. Christians were embattled on several fronts at once; on the outside were the "unbelieving" Jews and the hostile pagans. Orthonymous writings of the so-called church Fathers attacked these Others and defended the true faith throughout the period; but so too did forged documents, believed by insiders to convey especial authority in view of their authorial claims. In many instances these forged attacks and apologiae served several purposes at once, intramural and extramural. And so it is important yet again to stress the potential

multifunctionality of our surviving texts. Like many (most?) writings, Christian forgeries could and did serve a variety of purposes at one and the same time. The Coptic Gospel of Thomas polemicizes against apocalyptic expectations of other Christian teachers, against Judaism and Judaizing, and against theologies that stress the reality and importance of the flesh. It did not serve a solitary purpose. A writing such as the Protevangelium Jacobi serves nonpolemical ends of entertainment and of filling in lacunae from the stories of Mary and Jesus, but also apologetic aims in answering the charges against the savior and his mother by a pagan critic such as Celsus. It is not important to my study that the polemical functions of this or that forgery be seen as the one and only purpose of the work. On a practical level, the multifunctionality of several of these texts means that they will be discussed under more than one rubric.

The rubrics that I have devised are topical, guided to some extent by a loosely chronological logic. The earliest orthonymous Christian writings are concerned to no small extent with questions of eschatology. 1 Thessalonians, for example, is written, at least in part, to comfort those whose expectations of an imminent appearance of the Lord from heaven had been frustrated by the passage of time, and who were, as a result, concerned over the fate of those who had died in the interim. 1 Corinthians is written, again in part, to correct those within the community with an overly realized eschatology that claimed the benefits of the resurrected existence were already available and enjoyed in the present age, with little or nothing to expect in a cataclysmic break with the present in the future. Given this feature of early authentic writings, it is no surprise that our earliest surviving forgeries too deal with issues of eschatology—most obviously 2 Thessalonians but also, I will argue, Colossians and Ephesians (Chapter Seven). It is of some interest that the range of eschatological views that result through juxtaposition of the various perspectives found in these writings were all deemed worthy of hearing, in no small part because of the apostolic authority that lay behind them. And so, all of them were eventually accepted as canonical views, resulting in the paradoxical eschatology of "already and not yet." From early days, followers of Jesus were entrenched in theologies of paradox, later to come to fruition in complex Christological ("fully divine and fully human") and Trinitarian ("three persons but one God") views.

The eschatological questions did not cease with the passing of the first Christian generation, of course, and so later forged writings continued to take them on, both within the canon (2 Timothy; 2 Peter) and outside (Gospel of Thomas; Chapter Eight). Paul, the alleged author of most of these sundry works, was himself a debated topic from early days, as is evident from his own writings, such as the Corinthian correspondence and the letter to the Galatians. And so we find a number of early forgeries that are concerned either to promote or to attack Paul's authority, for example, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Acts (which I will argue, as I've mentioned, is a non-pseudepigraphic forgery) on one side of the issue (Chapter Nine), and James, Jude, the Epistula Petri, and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* on the other (Chapter Ten). A closely related problem, best known precisely from the Pauline letters, has to do with the status of Jews and, relatedly, Jewish Christianity; these issues too were dealt with in polemical forgeries (including those discussed in Chapter Ten), such as the Gospel of Peter, the Epistula Clementis, the Didascalia, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Abgar Correspondence, the Gospel of Nicodemus, and other writings of the Pilate cycle (Chapter Eleven).

Also connected with Paul and his churches were problems of church hierarchy, structure, organization, and authority. Forgeries dealing with such issues abounded, from the Pastoral epistles of the New Testament through the "church order" literature (e.g., the Didascalia, Apostolic Church Order, Apostolic Canons, Apostolic Constitutions), but also in such writings as the Paraphrase of Shem from Nag Hammadi and the Ascension of Isaiah (Chapter Twelve).

Among the internecine theological conflicts that eventually emerged in the period, none proved so productive of forgery as those involving the nature, status, and relevance of "the flesh," especially because views of the flesh became intricately connected with so many other crucial and debated issues, such as the unity of the Godhead, the nature of creation, the person of Christ, the efficacy of his death, the reality of his physical resurrection, and the future fate of the believer. And so numerous forgeries written under apostolic authority emerged, arguing either against the flesh (the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, the Book of Thomas the Contender, the Gospel of Thomas, the Paraphrase of Shem) or in favor of it (3 Corinthians, the Epistula Apostolorum, the Nag Hammadi tractate Melchizedek, the

Apocalypse of Peter and the Apocalypse of Paul, and even, by misdirection, I will argue, the extant letter of Laodiceans; all in Chapter Thirteen).

Other theological debates engendered yet other forgeries from disputes with the Manichaeans (Abgar Correspondence) to the Arian controversies (the Pseudo-Ignatians; Chapter Fourteen). And, as mentioned, a significant range of forgeries appeared as apologetic defenses of the faith, in quite diverse but manifest ways, including the Martyrdom of Polycarp (which I will argue is a non-pseudepigraphic forgery), the Protevangelium Jacobi, the Acts of Pilate, the correspondence of Paul and Seneca, and the Sibylline oracles (Chapter Fifteen). In the final chapter I return to the question of self-justification, asking how the forgers of early Christian documents may have explained to themselves the morality of their literary endeavors.

As should be clear from this overview, my concern in the study is less with establishing where forgery has occurred than in determining the function of the forgery, in particular as this relates to Christian polemics. But the function of a forgery, naturally, depends on the prior question, and so, where there are significant debates that need to be addressed, I take them on. Here I should reiterate my three-pronged approach. Works whose authorship continues to be a hotly debated topic—for example 2 Thessalonians or 1 Peter—I discuss at length, making a range of arguments in support of my view that they are in fact forged. Other works, about which there is less disagreement—for example 2 Peter—I devote much less argument to, appealing instead to widely accepted lines of reasoning. In yet other instances there is no scholarly disagreement of any moment—the Gospel of Peter or the Letters of Paul and Seneca, for example. In such instances I focus almost exclusively on the question of function.

It is my view that in every instance of forgery that I discuss, the intention of the forger was to deceive his readers into thinking he was someone other than who he was; his motivation was not only to receive a simple hearing of his views (although certainly that) but also to authorize his views through the authority provided by the status of his falsely assumed authorial name. His goal was to advance his own polemical agenda.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Early Pauline Forgeries Dealing with Eschatology

Eschatology was supremely important at the outset of the Christian movement. Jesus' apocalyptic proclamation of the coming kingdom, which was to appear before "this generation passes away" (Mark 13:30), found its mirror in the preaching of his earliest followers, who expected Jesus himself soon to return from heaven as the Son of Man. The message was continued in the missionary preaching of Paul and his followers, as evidenced in our earliest Christian writings, such as 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Alternative eschatologies also appeared in the early stages of the Christian movement, as Paul's own writings attest. Some members of the Thessalonian congregation came to fear that those who had died already had lost out on their eschatological reward. Others in not-so-distant Corinth came to think that they had begun to reap the benefits of that reward in this life. Paul wrote in order to correct and comfort the despondent Thessalonians and to disabuse the enthusiastic Corinthians: there is a future reward, it will appear with the coming of Jesus, and it will involve a radical transformation not only of the world and its existing order, but also of the human body, as there will be resurrection of both the living and the dead into an immortal existence.

In view of the alternative perspectives more widely available, it comes as no surprise that some of the earliest Christian forgeries deal with just this issue of eschatology, produced by unknown authors claiming the authority of the apostle himself. At the end of the day it is impossible to provide relative datings of these pseudepigraphic efforts of Pauline Christians;[1] it is completely plausible to think, however, that they emerged not long after the death of Paul himself, or even, conceivably, while he was still alive. There is no way to know.[2] In any event it may well be that just as 1 Thessalonians is the earliest surviving orthonymous Christian writing of any kind, its "sequel," 2 Thessalonians, is the earliest surviving Christian forgery.

SECOND THESSALONIANS

The History of the Question

Problems connected to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians were first recognized by J. C. Chr. Schmidt in 1801.[3] Schmidt pointed out that 1 Thessalonians is a letter allegedly by Paul that maintains that the end is imminent, whereas 2 Thessalonians warns against a letter allegedly by Paul that maintained that the end is imminent (2:2). How could one explain this situation? If 1 Thessalonians were written first, would Paul not remember what he had written by the time he wrote 2 Thessalonians? If, conversely, 2 Thessalonians were written first, would Paul not remember that he warned his readers against precisely the views that he now embraced in the second letter? "In any case, it remains puzzling why he described in one letter the appearance of Christ as near, and in the other warned not to expect it as being near."[4]

Schmidt considers the obvious possibilities that Paul at some point changed his mind and rejected his earlier views, but he finds these possibilities wanting. In addition, he evaluates every part of 1 Thessalonians as being completely Pauline, including the words of the imminent coming of Christ. Is 2 Thessalonians then to be considered a forgery? No, for Schmidt, this letter too appears completely Pauline, with the exception of the offending passage, the warning of 2:1–2 and the fantasies about the Antichrist that follow. As he points out: "The accuser is frequently himself at fault and complains only in order to remove suspicion from his person."[5] In this case, though, it is not the whole letter that is forged; it is only the twelve verses in question. Once 2:1–12 are removed from the letter, 2:13 can be seen to follow the end of chapter 1 without obvious break. What we have, then, is not a forgery but a falsely interpolated pericope.

As we will see, for later scholars it was precisely the peculiarly Pauline character of 2 Thessalonians—specifically its close resemblance to 1 Thessalonians itself—that, somewhat ironically, made it suspect. But Schmidt at least opened the debate with a plausible scenario, for directly at the point where 2 Thessalonians begins to diverge from its predecessor in theme it begins to contradict it in substance. It was many decades, however, before wider attention was drawn to the tensions between the two books, and between 2 Thessalonians and the other Pauline letters in general. In 1862 Hilgenfeld made the argument still favored by many scholars today,

that 2 Thessalonians was forged precisely in order to replace its predecessor as Paul's (only) letter to the Thessalonians.[6] Thirty years later it had become yet more widely suspected that 2 Thessalonians could not be Pauline, as summed up in the arguments of Holtzmann: unlike the authentic Pauline letters, there was no anti-Jewish polemic in the book, in places it uses non-Pauline language, it contains a number of expansions of parallels from the first letter, and it contains no citations of the Hebrew Bible.[7]

These lines of argumentation can be easily picked apart and so were not widely convincing across the critical spectrum. A solid basis for seeing 2 Thessalonians as non-Pauline was not laid until Wrede's penetrating analysis of its relationship to 1 Thessalonians, about which I will have more to say presently. Trilling was the first to write a major commentary based on the assumption of non-Pauline authorship; important contributions by Marxsen, Krenz, and Bailey have furthered the discussion. There continue to be holdouts for Pauline authorship, most notably, among critical scholars, Robert Jewett and Abraham Malherbe. Malherbe can claim, in his Anchor Bible Commentary, that the "majority" of biblical scholars continues to hold to authenticity.[8] This may be true, but if so, it is simply because a sizeable plurality of biblical scholars (counting broadly) hold theological views that make the presence of literary forgeries in the canon of scripture untenable on principle. Among scholars with no such scruples, the balance swings in the other direction, and for compelling reasons.

2 Thessalonians as a Forgery

One reason the case for the inauthenticity of 2 Thessalonians has occasionally seemed wanting, even to some very fine scholars, is that critics have often resorted to a shotgun approach, citing every possible argument, good or bad, in support of their position. It is all too easy to dismiss bad arguments, leaving an appearance of evidence in balance, pro and con. And so, for example, the letter is often said to lack Paul's customary "warmth" (are all of Paul's writings necessarily warm? Even to the same congregation? Think of the different fragments of correspondence with the Corinthians—including 2 Cor. 10–13); the focus is on Christ as Kurios rather than on his cross (does Paul have to focus on the cross, in everything he says?); the letter does not employ the diatribe style (as if Paul was obliged to do so); the letter is lacking in justification language (do we need

to read every Pauline letter with Lutheran blinders?). A scholar such as Malherbe can easily dismiss such claims, making the other arguments seem weak by association.

A better tack is to drive hard the compelling arguments. The two most striking involve (1) the impressive parallels to 1 Thessalonians, first pushed strenuously by Wrede, which, when examined closely, seem virtually inexplicable on grounds other than that a second author (not Paul) has used Paul's letter as a model for his own; and (2) the substantive differences *from* 1 Thessalonians in precisely the passage (recognized already by Schmidt) where the parallels evaporate. It is the combination of these two arguments that proves especially suasive. Where the author of 2 Thessalonians has borrowed words and phrases from 1 Thessalonians, of course he sounds like Paul (it is easy to take over the words of another writing, after all). And where he projects his own views onto the apostle, he in fact stands at odds with him. Add to these arguments some comments on differences in aspects of style in the author's free composition, and there are solid reasons for thinking that 2 Thessalonians was written by someone intent on authorizing a non-Pauline view in the name of the apostle himself.

The Relationship to 1 Thessalonians

Over a century ago Wrede showed that the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are massive and operate on various levels; his arguments have been confirmed and strengthened by Krenz and others.[9] As will be seen, these parallels do not indicate that Paul wrote both letters; on the contrary, a later author is imitating Paul.[10]

The easiest places to imitate the style and wording of a letter are its beginning and ending, and here the two Thessalonian letters are virtually identical. What is more, their concurrences make them stand alone among the Pauline writings: these are not the ways Paul begins and ends any of his other letters. With respect to the beginnings, we have the following:

> Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη. (1 Thess. 1:1)
>
> Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη. . . . (2 Thess. 1:1)

They are virtually the same. The three named authors are identical in each place, and they are not further identified apart from their names. It is especially striking that in only these two letters of the entire Pauline corpus is Paul not described with an epithet such as "apostle" (as in most of his letters) or "slave" (Philippians) or "prisoner for Christ" (Philemon). Moreover, both letters refer to the church as comprising the people of a place—"of the Thessalonians"—as opposed to naming the city in which they dwell ("the church of God which is in Corinth"); this too is unlike any other Pauline letter.

So too the closing of the letters:

> ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν. (1 Thess. 5:28)
> ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. (2 Thess. 3:18)

Apart from the πάντων, this is a nine-word sequence of verbatim agreement. Other agreements occur throughout the letters, sometimes at the simple level of phrasing. In the following instances, the wording is found only in these two letters in the entire Pauline corpus. This should not be taken to mean that the second letter is "obviously Pauline," as some interpreters such as Robert Jewett would maintain: it is quite easy for a copyist to take over words from another letter.

ἔργον πίστεως (found only, in the Pauline corpus, in 1 Thess. 1:3 and 2 Thess. 1:11)

οἱ μὴ εἰδοτες τὸν θεόν (as reference to pagans, only in 1 Thess. 4:5; 2 Thess. 1:8)

πλεονάζειν used with ἀγάπη (only 1 Thess. 3:12; 2 Thess. 1:3)

ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί (only 1 Thess. 5:12; 2 Thess. 2:1; the verb occurs only two other times in the Pauline corpus, 1 Thess. 4:1 in the first person plural and Phil. 4:3, first singular)

ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ θεοῦ/κυρίου (only 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13)

κατευθύνειν (only 1 Thess. 3:11; 2 Thess. 3:5 and as an optative, both times)

In addition, στηρίξαι with ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας is found in 1 Thess. 3:13 and 2 Thess. 2:17 (worded slightly differently, but both coming at the end of the

body of the letter, in the internal benediction, before the paranesis), and only here in Paul's letters; only in 1 Thess. 4.7 and 2 Thess. 2:13–14 are "call and sanctification" joined together; and the root ατακ is found in 1 Thess. 5:14 and 2 Thess. 3:6, 7, and 11, and nowhere else in the entire New Testament. Most striking, and most frequently noted is the close connection of 1 Thess. 2:9 and 2 Thess. 3:8: Νυκτὸς
καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν.

How are we to imagine such impressive and extensive verbal parallels? Is it likely that Paul remembered to the very word what he said at times in his earlier letter, creating verbatim agreements (found in none of his other writings from the same time) extending sometimes to sequences of nine, ten, or more words? Even if he wrote the second letter just, say, six weeks later, would he remember such phrases, which involve not only important ideas but also off-the-cuff comments and expressions? It is simple to see how a copyist may have taken over words and phrases here and there to make the letter sound so much like the first one. But why would Paul have done so, assuming, say, that he kept a copy on hand? Why would he delve into the heart of the first letter to pull out a word, a phrase, a sentence that he had earlier used to be sure to use it again? Is this how Paul ever writes?

We do have a way of knowing. There are other letters that deal with topics similar to one another: Galatians and Romans, for example. But such extensive "borrowings" are not found in them.[11] And we have yet other letters written—as allegedly were the Thessalonian epistles—to the same community within a relatively short period of time (1 and 2 Corinthians). Once again, there is nothing like this phenomenon to be found.

The agreements do not occur simply on the level of words, phrases, and sentences. The structure and layout of the two letters are strikingly parallel. Both, unlike any other Pauline letter, have two thanksgivings (instead of one), one at the outset and one in the body of the letter (1 Thess. 1:2–10; 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:3–12; 2:13).[12] They both contain an eschatological section, an admonition to be strong and to abide in the apostolic teaching, and a warning against idleness. Indeed, as Bailey has stressed, there is not a single major theme in 2 Thessalonians that is not also found in 1 Thessalonians.[13]

This is not how Paul wrote any of his other letters, by replicating the structure (to this degree) and taking over the vocabulary and even sentences of an earlier letter he wrote. But it is no stretch to imagine that this is how a

forger would operate, to provide a Pauline feel to the letter. The evidence is clinched when seen in relation to the style and theology of the second letter, which differ from those of the first.

Issues of Style

It is altogether simple for a forger to take over the words and phrases of an author's other writing. It is a different matter to be able to imitate the author's style when engaging in free composition. Jewett sensibly objected to the stylistic arguments mounted by Trilling, because—as often happens in discussions of style in the Deutero-Paulines—Trilling offered no bases of comparison with the established Pauline writings.[14] It is one thing to say that an author uses excessively long, complex sentences; it is another thing to show that this is somehow different from how Paul himself was known to write.

Two points should be kept in view at the outset of any discussion of Pauline style. The first is that the question is never whether Paul was capable of writing in one style or another. He was an educated author, and like all educated authors he could vary his style, to some degree at least, as he saw fit. But everyone does in fact typically write in a certain style, often without putting a great deal of thought into questions such as how to effect subordination, whether to prefer subordination to coordination, how to choose which conjunctions to prefer over others, how to construct participial clauses, how to employ the infinitive, and so on. Most authors, unless they are overwhelmingly conscious of being involved in a rhetorical exercise (for example, trained rhetoricians working on an oratorical production), simply write the way they write. No one can plausibly claim that Paul could not have written in the style of, say, Luke or the author of Hebrews, if he had really wanted to. At the same time, no one can plausibly claim that Paul did write that way.

The second point will require more extended discussion, and so I leave it to a short Interlude to come at the conclusion of the next chapter. It is often claimed by scholars of the New Testament that differences of writing style among, say, the Pauline or Petrine letters can be accounted for by the use of secretaries. This secretary hypothesis has become a panacea for all things authorially dubious, as even a quick survey of the commentaries makes abundantly clear. It nonetheless rests on an extremely thin, virtually

nonexistent, evidentiary basis. All this I will try to show anon; I mention it here simply to forestall the anticipated objection that stylistic differences within the Pauline corpus derive from secretarial input.[15]

The most directed study of the style of 2 Thessalonians was undertaken by Darryl Schmidt, who showed on the basis of several unrelated but significant grounds that the letter differs, stylistically, from the undisputed Pauline letters.[16] Schmidt's essay does not engage in bland generalities about long sentences and strange style, but provides a detailed demonstration that 2 Thessalonians (and Colossians and Ephesians) are not written in Paul's typical style. Among his criteria, three are especially striking. First, he considers sentences as measured by the numbers of embedded clauses and levels of embedding. 2 Thess. 1:3–12 is often pointed to as a long and complex sentence. It is true, as Schmidt points out, that there are other sentences in the undisputed letters that are nearly as long (2 Cor. 6:3–10, 11:24–31). But these letters do not match the complexity of the sentences in 2 Thessalonians. Specifically, Schmidt takes the longest sentence in the opening thanksgiving section of each of the Pauline letters and measures how many embedded clauses there are and how many layers of embeddedness. The results are quite telling: in Romans there are five embedded clauses at four layers of embeddedness; 1 Corinthians: six clauses at four layers; 2 Corinthians: five clauses at three levels; Philippians: six clauses at one level; 1 Thessalonians: ten clauses at five levels. Contrast these figures with the Deutero-Paulines: Colossians: twelve clauses at eight levels; Ephesians: eighteen clauses at thirteen levels; and most striking, 2 Thessalonians: a whopping twenty-two clauses at fifteen levels of embeddedness. The point, again, is not that this is an impossibly more complex style (it is not nearly as complex as that found in numerous other authors); the point is that it is an uncharacteristically Pauline style.

Schmidt then considers a different stylistic feature, the patterns of genitive constructions in nonphrase strings, of which there are three kinds: (1) article + noun + article + noun (genitive); (2) a genitive pronoun added to a string; (c) anarthrous nouns in the same kind of string. When calculated for every 1,000 words in the text, one finds the following frequencies of these kinds of strings (Appendix 2): Romans 12.8 strings per thousand words; 1 Corinthians 8.8 strings; 2 Corinthians 13.1 strings; Galatians 15.2 strings; Philippians 7.4 strings; 1 Thessalonians 10.8 strings; Philemon 11.9 strings. Again, the contrast with the Deutero-Paulines, and especially 2

Thessalonians is stark: Colossians 29.7 strings; Ephesians 31.7 strings; and 2 Thessalonians 26.7 strings.

Third, Schmidt considers the frequency with which a writing uses coordinating and subordinating constructions. Leaving out the ubiquitous καί, he finds the relative frequency of coordination versus subordination (per hundred words) to work out as follows: Romans 68:34; 1 Corinthians 77:47; 2 Corinthians 59:42; Galatians 65:44; 1 Thessalonians 49:38; Philippians 53:36; Philemon 50:38. Once again there is a contrast with the Deutero-Paulines, where subordination is far more relatively common: Colossians 18:25; Ephesians 27:26; 2 Thessalonians 41:37.

The ultimate payoff of these three measurements is that the general sense that scholars have had for many decades that 2 Thessalonians (and the other two Deutero-Paulines) contains a more complex style than the undisputed letters—including the author's model, 1 Thessalonians—is in fact borne out. It is indeed a more complex style. In isolation this kind of stylistic demonstration can carry little weight. Authors can and do vary their style, and statistical models are constantly challenged on grounds related both to the statistics and the models. But when taken in tandem with the earlier consideration, that the author of 2 Thessalonians has followed the structure and borrowed the words, phrases, and even sentences of 1 Thessalonians, the fact that the nonborrowed materials appear in a non-Pauline style appears far more formidable. Remaining doubts can be removed by the most complex of the three main arguments against Pauline authorship, the theology of the letter.

The Theology of 2 Thessalonians

As recognized already by J. E. Chr. Schmidt more than two centuries ago, the theological problem of 2 Thessalonians involves the divergent eschatological outlook of 2:1–12. There are two issues involved: Is the author addressing a problem of a realized or an imminent eschatology? And does his resolution of the problem contradict the views of 1 Thess. 4:13–5:11?

The first issue hinges to a great extent on the exegesis of 2 Thess. 2:2, and especially the key term ἐνέστηκεν.. The readers are urged, with respect to the "parousia" of Christ and "our gathering together with him," not to be "quickly shaken or disturbed"—whether "by spirit, by a word, or by a letter

as if from us" to the effect that ἐνέστηκεν.. In this context, does the perfect of ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου. mean that the day of the Lord "has already come and is now present," an eschatology analogous to what Paul disparages in 1 Corinthians, or that "it is virtually here and is soon to be realized," comparable, say, to the proclamation of Jesus in Mark 1:15, "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ)??[17]

The use of the term ἐνίστημι in other Christian literature of the period is of only limited help. Twice in the writings of Paul and three times in the letter of Barnabas the word is clearly used to refer to "things present" as opposed to things "yet to come" (ἐνεστῶτα . . . μέλλοντα; Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22; Barn. 1.7, 5.3, 17.2). On two other occasions it is used in this sense without the explicit contrast, in Barn. 4.1 and Heb. 9:9. At other times the usage—whether present reality or imminent occurrence—is ambiguous, as in Gal. 1:4 ("to deliver us from the present/from the impending evil age"). Somewhat less ambivalent is 1 Cor. 7:26, which like 2 Thess. 2:2 uses the perfect tense, but probably to imply a future event; it is because of the "impending distress" (probably) that one should not change one's marital status. In 2 Tim. 3:1 the term is used to denote something yet to come, but there it is an unambiguous future tense.

As is the case with all these other instances, it is the context that is decisive for the meaning in 2 Thess. 2:2. The passage appears to require the verb to refer to something that is yet to happen but is very much imminent. For one thing, it makes little sense to suppose that the audience would be deeply shaken or disturbed by thinking that they were already experiencing the glories of the eschatological day of the Lord. Others who held that view —the Corinthian enthusiasts, for example—seemed rather to have exulted in the idea. If, on the other hand, the destruction of all things was ready to occur at any moment, that could well frighten anyone, even those sure to be on the winning side.

But more than that, the eschatological view under attack can best be discerned in the argument used by the author to oppose it. What the author decidedly does not do is malign their aberrant eschatological notion by arguing that their present existence is anything *but* the glorious life of the kingdom. He does not, that is, correct their view by pointing out that they were still living in a world filled with evil, suffering, pain, and sin, or stress for them that they are living lives of hardship and suffering rather than

glory, as, for instance, Paul does, using considerable sarcasm, in 1 Cor. 4:8, against opponents who thought very much this same thing.

Instead, this "Paul" shows the Thessalonians that they are wrong in their eschatological views, stated in 2:2, by giving them the correct apocalyptic scenario, in view of their incorrect one. The Day of the Lord is not come/almost here because first there must be "the rebellion" and then "the man of lawlessness" must arise, who will be slain by the Lord at his parousia. Why does the author explain that the "restraining power" needs to be released and that this anti-Christ figure has to arise before the end can come? It is because he is correcting a view that maintained that the end was almost here and that nothing yet need happen before it could come.

Thus the author is providing his readers with the true apocalyptic scenario in order to rectify the false one they held. That is to say, he does not correct a nonapocalyptic view by insisting on an apocalyptic one. He and his readers both agree that there is to be an apocalyptic sequence of events at the very end of the age, at the coming of the Day of the Lord. But they have come to imagine—on some grounds connected wrongly with him ("a letter as if by us")—a scenario that needs to be set straight. Their idea is not that there is to be no scenario at all; it is that it involves a scenario that can happen at any moment, imminently.

That is why the author opens his discussion of the issue by appealing to "the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him" (2:1). He is appealing here not to a new or different teaching that his readers do not accept. He is beginning his plea on a common ground of shared tradition: whatever their differences of eschatological outlook, they agree that the end will involve a return of Jesus and a gathering of the believers to join him. In arguing in this way, the author is indeed following an established Pauline approach, easily available to him from the other Pauline letters. When Paul wanted to argue against the enthusiasts in Corinth that the resurrection was a physical, future event, he did so by establishing common ground, that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead. 1 Corinthians 15 does not provide a demonstration that Jesus' resurrection was bodily; it is an argument based on the agreed belief that it was bodily. Since Jesus' resurrection was bodily, so too, by implication, will be the resurrection of those who follow him. But that necessarily means, for Paul, that it is a future event, not a past event already experienced.

So too in 2 Thessalonians. An author claiming to be Paul establishes the common ground he has with the readers, that the end involves the "parousia and gathering together with the Lord." If that is true, then the Day of the Lord has not yet appeared; it is yet to come. His readers have not worked through this implication carefully. The parousia and ingathering are to come as God's response to the evil in the world; it is then that he will overthrow all that is opposed to him to establish his kingdom. But the forces of evil have not yet been fully unleashed. Only when they are, with the appearance of the anti-Christ figure, will God respond by bringing Jesus back from heaven for judgment on the earth. The eschatology being opposed is not realized but absolutely imminent.

It should not be objected that Paul himself, in combating the enthusiasts of 1 Corinthians, also provided an apocalyptic scenario in order to show that they were wrong precisely in adopting a realized eschatology. That is not the function of 1 Cor. 15:50–57. Instead, the scenario there is given only after Paul has shown that his opponents' eschatological views are wrong, in order to lay out for them what is still to happen, once they are forced (in his opinion) to acknowledge that there is still an eschatology yet to happen. Moreover, the scenario in the Corinthian passage involves what will happen when Christ returns, not what needs to happen before he returns. To this extent, as well, it is incommensurate with the strategy of the author of 2 Thessalonians. And the reason is clear: one passage is opposing a realized and the other an imminent eschatology, as recognized by a range of recent scholars.[18]

There are several payoffs for this brief exegesis. For one thing, it means that the ἐνέστηκεν in 2:2 is indeed to be taken as an equivalent to the ἤγγικεν of Mark 1:15, so that the verse should be understood as meaning that the readers should not be disturbed by the notion that "the Day of the Lord is virtually here and soon to be realized." The Thessalonians can be assured, on the contrary, that the Day is not absolutely imminent.

As a result, the passage does indeed appear to contradict what Paul says in his undisputed letters, such as Rom. 13:12:
ἡ νὺξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν or Phil. 4:5, ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.. Yet more important, the view stands at odds with 1 Thessalonians as well, where the end is to come suddenly and unexpectedly, "like a thief in the night" (5:2). It should not be objected that 1 Thessalonians does not claim that the day will come "like a thief" to the followers of Jesus, but only to the unwary on

the outside. It is true that this is the rhetoric that Paul uses ("For you yourselves know full well"; 5:2). But his exhortations belie his rhetoric: if he really thought that his readers needed no reminder, he would scarcely have produced such a strenuous one. The exhortations that follow—to be alert and awake, lest they be caught off guard when the Lord arrives (1 Thess. 5:6–8)—make no sense unless the Thessalonians stood in need of warning. But that they do need to be warned about the imminence of the end stands at odds with what the author of 2 Thessalonians thinks: for this other author, the end will not come suddenly, without advance warning, like a thief in the night. There will in fact be plenty of warning, a whole sequence of events that must transpire. There is still some time to sleep and drink.

It may fairly be objected that the thief image of 1 Thessalonians speaks not of an absolutely imminent appearance of the Lord, but of a sudden appearance. However one stands on that issue, the reality is that the image is at odds with the view set forth by the author of 2 Thessalonians. For him the end is not coming right away, and it is not coming without advanced warning. Moreover, if it is true that this is what he actually taught the Thessalonians while he "was still with" them (2:5), then it is very difficult indeed to explain the problem of 1 Thessalonians, where members of the congregation are perplexed as to why the end has not happened right away and some have died in the interim (4:13–18). Paul's teaching would have been that it was *not* to come right away, and they would have known that. They thought otherwise—believing the end was imminent—because that is what Paul taught them. Conversely, if Paul is right in what he says in 1 Thess. 5:2, that they themselves "know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night," then it is well nigh impossible to understand how he can then tell them in 2 Thessalonians that the coming will not be sudden and unexpected, like a thief. It won't be like that at all, but will be anticipated by clear signs to all who can see. For 2 Thessalonians the coming of the Lord will not be like a burglar after dark; it will be like the much anticipated and broadcast arrival of a king.

It might be added that in view of the parallels to 1 Thessalonians advocates for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians typically claim that it was written on the heels of the other letter. But how would Paul change his eschatological views so suddenly and decisively? Coupled with the

problems posed by the parallels themselves, and the differences of style, the case for inauthenticity is very strong.

Nor does it resolve the tensions between the letters by following the suggestion occasionally made since Grotius in 1640, to reverse the chronological sequence of the two letters.[19] In that case the problems are simply compounded, as Krenz and others have noted. Under some such scenario, Paul first indicated that the Day of the Lord would not come except until some easily recognized signs had appeared (an anti-Christ entering into the Temple declaring himself divine), and then shortly after changed his mind and declared that the Thessalonians need to be constantly vigilant because the day would come like a thief, without advanced warning. Nor does it help to think, with Harnack, Dibelius, Goguel, and Schweizer—each of them with different scenarios—that the two letters are addressed by Paul to two different audiences in the Thessalonian church; there is in fact no indication of different audiences (quite the contrary), and the eschatological messages are in tension regardless of whom he addressed.[20]

Scholars who hold on to the authenticity of the letter occasionally mount arguments against the plausibility of it being a forgery, but in no instance can these parries carry conviction. Jewett, for example, claims that "there is scarcely enough time between Paul's death and C.E 100 for a forgery to gain credence."[21] Here, however, unreflective "common sense" must give way to a wider knowledge of ancient practices of forgery. For as we have already seen, numerous ancient authors complained about forgeries—quite successful ones—circulating in their own names, even within their own lifetimes (not just forty years later). One naturally thinks of Martial, living in the same century as the Thessalonian correspondence (poems allegedly by him, circulating while he was still living and writing, and even in his home city); or of Galen some decades later (the whole point of *De libriis propriis*); or of Apuleius (a letter produced at his trial); or for later periods, thinking of written correspondence, letters in the names of such prominent figures as Jerome and Augustine, circulating in their own literary environs. The irony is that scholars who claim that 2 Thessalonians is authentic more or less have to admit that Paul himself envisaged the possibility of a Pauline forgery in his own lifetime, on the grounds of 2 Thessalonians itself (2:2).

It is sometimes claimed, similarly, that if the letter was sent to the Thessalonians, and if it contradicted what was said in 1 Thessalonians, they

would have known and rejected it as inauthentic.[22] But this objection assumes that the letter would have been sent to Thessalonica. Why would it have been? It is a forgery! It could have been circulated absolutely anywhere in the Greek-speaking Christian world. Finally, it has sometimes been argued that there is no plausible historical context after Paul's day for such a letter, when apocalyptic fervor had died out from the Christian communities: "it appears in fact that the intense expectation of the parousia typical for Paul's lifetime tended to slacken after his death."[23] Even more than the other parries, this appears to be grasping at straws: imminent apocalyptic hopes have never yet died out, to our day, and never will within Christendom, world without end. Of greater moment, they certainly had not died out by the end of the first century. One needs only think of such texts as Didache 16 and (how can it not have occurred?) the book of Revelation.

2 Thessalonians as a Counterforgery

A good deal of exegetical ink has been spilled over the source of the Thessalonians' alleged disturbance that the Day of the Lord was imminent. The author tells them not to be upset
μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς. Here again, there are two major issues. First, does the final phrase, δι' ἡμῶν. apply to all three sources of information or only to the third? Has some kind of spiritual (ecstatic?) communication "as by us," some kind of oral teaching "as by us," and some kind of letter "as by us" been invoked? Or has the teaching come through a spiritual communication, an oral teaching, and a letter that by itself is allegedly "by us?"[24]

For the purposes of my discussion here, the decision does not much matter, as in both cases, the author is referring to a letter "as by us." Still, the exegetical decision is best made in reference to the broader context, and, as we will see, this context is significant for yet other reasons. For there is a second reference to "our letter" in 2:15, where the author urges his readers to stand fast and hold to the traditions
ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.. Since in this second case, there are only two items mentioned—a word and a letter—it does not appear to be an exact backward glance to the earlier list of three items. That in itself would suggest that the "spirit" was not included among the items

connected with "us" in 2:2. And if all three items are not connected to "us," then it seems unlikely that two of the three were. It is the third item in the list that came "as by us."

Of greater moment for our reflections here is, second, the meaning and significance of ὡς in 2:2. Does the author refer to the earlier letter "as having (really) come from us" or "as if (but not really) having come from us"? Despite the widespread disagreement among exegetes, here too the wording of 2:15 must be decisive. If the author of 2:2 wanted to refer to a letter that "really did" come from us, he would scarcely have needed to provide the "ὡς" in the first place. He would simply have said "through our letter"—as he says in 2:15. The reference to a letter in 2:15, in fact, is given in contrast to the letter mentioned in 2:2. The earlier reference is to a letter "as if" by us, and is by implication denigrated by the author, who "corrects" the eschatology that this false letter conveyed. The later reference is to a letter that really is "ours," which is affirmed in what it taught its readers ("stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught" in that letter).

Hanna Roose has recently argued that by using the phrase ὡς δι' ἡμων the author of 2:2 intentionally left the reference to the earlier letter ambiguous, because as a forger claiming to be Paul writing to the Thessalonians he wanted the earlier letter to look believably Pauline (really from us, i.e., 1 Thessalonians) while casting some doubt in the minds of his actual readers (it was not really from us).[25] This solution is probably too clever by half. Among other things it has to assume that there are no other references to Paul's "first" letter in 2 Thessalonians, since, if there are, then the ambiguity of 2:2 falls apart. But 2:15 does seem to be a reference to Paul's earlier letter (1 Thessalonians). How to resolve that problem? Roose, with a number of other scholars, including notably Lindemann, maintains that 2:15 refers not to an earlier letter but to the present one: the readers are to hold fast to the teachings found in it. This interpretation, however, overlooks the force of the aorist ἐδιδάχθητε in 2:15. The author is referring to a previous, past set of teaching that came by oral delivery (a word) and a written communication (a letter), not to the present letter.

This conclusion also shows the problem with the view widely taken otherwise, for example, by Lindemann and others, that 2:2 is to be understood to be a disparaging comment on 1 Thessalonians.[26] In this view, by a forger who wanted his readers to think that *this* letter (2 Thessalonians)

—and its eschatological views—was the one from Paul, whereas the other, 1 Thessalonians, was the forgery. Were this view true, 2 Thessalonians would be a counterforgery with chutzpah. As Marxsen expresses the view, without reference to Lindemann's influential article, which was published five years earlier: "In truth, 2 Thessalonians must be regarded as Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. It alone is the genuine Pauline letter. … The author of 2 Thess wants to edge out 1 Thess with his writing." Later: "The author of 2 Thess wants to replace 1 Thess with his writing."[27]

The problem overlooked by this view is, again, the positive reference to an earlier letter in 2:15. Whatever the author is castigating in 2:2, it is not the letter of 1 Thessalonians, as tempting as that view might be. The author in fact contrasts the δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι᾽ ἡμῶν of 2:2 with δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν of 2:15. It is only the latter that is "actually" by the author; the other was not. This is an author who knows 1 Thessalonians, who realizes that it is accepted as authentically Pauline, who embraces it of necessity (and even copies it)—since he too wants to be thought of as Paul—and who speaks disparagingly of some other letter, allegedly but not really by Paul, which conveyed an aberrant understanding of eschatology. The irony is that this lost letter—whether it ever existed or not cannot be known—would have adopted an eschatology very much like that found in 1 Thessalonians, and the author does want to counter its views.

Eva-Maria Becker has recently played with the idea that this lost letter was an actual Pauline letter in circulation.[28] This is a possibility, but the reality is that whoever forged 2 Thessalonians, wanting to label this other letter (whether it existed or not) a forgery, would have had no way of knowing, at the end of the day, whether it was authentic or not, assuming it existed. And so for the interpretation of 2 Thessalonians the question is moot. What appears certain is that the letter of 2:2 is not 1 Thessalonians but a letter allegedly by Paul that the author wants to denigrate both in terms of authorship and, relatedly, authority. It conveys the false teaching of the eschaton. But since 2 Thessalonians affirms 1 Thessalonians, and yet proffers an alternative understanding of eschatology, one must conclude that its author wanted its readers to read the teaching of 1 Thessalonians in light of its own eschatological assertions. Or, to use the language that has recently come to be in vogue, 2 Thessalonians appears to be providing "reading instructions" for 1 Thessalonians.[29]

H. Roose, who sees the relation of the two letters in this light, has made a specific argument for how the "instructions" work, by describing the divergent understandings of the parousia in the two letters, arguing that when they are taken together as a unit the "Day of the Lord" and the "parousia" become coterminous, so that there is now a firm thematic unity between the events of 1 Thess. 4:13–18 on the one hand and 5:1–11 on the other. This view may be taking the matter a step too far, as surely Paul himself saw a firm thematic unity between these two passages that, off his pen, did not experience a chapter break between them. But it is true that when the letters are read together, the "imminent" and "sudden" eschatology of 1 Thessalonians is muted and altered.

It should not be objected that no one would place two such letters in a canon and assume they were complementary when they so clearly stand at odds with one another. Church leaders did place them in the same canon and Christian readers have always read them as complementary, as attested so elegantly by the advocates of the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians still today. But in fact their views were not seen as harmonious by the author of the second letter. He objected to an eschatology that insisted that Jesus was coming suddenly and unexpectedly, and in the imminent future, right away. 1 Thessalonians could certainly be read as conveying just such a message, but the author could scarcely denigrate that letter, as it was widely known to have come from the apostle himself. Another letter was (allegedly? actually?) available, however, that made the point even more strenuously and disturbingly, and this other letter too claimed to be written by Paul. Or so the forger averred. It was to counter this false letter that he produced a false letter of his own. He countered a forgery by producing a forgery. This is the first known instance of a Christian counterforgery, in the strong sense.[30]

In order to make his handiwork more effective, the author employed several of the known tools of the forger's trade. He replicated the distinctive vocabulary and adopted key instances of the phrasing of an authentic letter, structuring his along similar lines, and addressing most of the same major issues. He provided clear instances of verisimilitude, including a borrowed instance of "remembrance" of the time he had allegedly spent among the congregation, in words taken from the earlier letter (2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Thess. 2:9). He warned his readers against a forgery circulating in his name (2:2), a ploy to be repeated by later Christian forgers. And at the end he did perhaps

"protest too much": "The greeting is in my own hand, the hand of Paul, which is the sign in all my letters. This is how I write" (3:17). The first six words—ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου are precisely parallel to 1 Cor. *16:21*, and are matched still more famously by Gal. 6:11. But in neither of these instances is Paul's final signing off—after his amanuensis had penned his dictation—said to be a mark of authenticity. It may have been that; but in both other instances it may as well have been a way of personalizing the letter for his readers. If this was the way Paul always finished his letters, it is more than a little strange that he does not end all his letters this way, and stranger still that he never refers to the practice as a prophylaxis against forgery.[31] At the same time, it is an odd claim to make in a (Christian) culture where letters circulated more commonly in copies rather than autographs. Did Paul himself expect only his handwritten copy to be read among his churches? If not, then it is hard to understand how he could have imagined 3:17 would be a bona fide demonstration of authenticity. On the other hand, it makes sense for a forger to make the claim. It did, after all, prove effective in throwing readers off the scent of the author's deceit, even though none of these readers saw a single iota of Paul's actual handwriting. Moreover, it was a ploy used by other forgers of antiquity.[32]

COLOSSIANS

The letter to the Colossians is sometimes taken to be the earliest surviving Pauline pseudepigraphon, and thus the earliest Christian forgery of any kind.[33] But there is obviously no way to say for certain: we do not know who wrote the letter, to whom, or where. As a result, it is virtually impossible to establish its relative chronology in relation, say, to 2 Thessalonians. It is also difficult—again, well nigh impossible—to identify with any level of certainty the adversaries who are being opposed, although I will argue below that they are probably to be taken as real, not imaginary. What is most clear is that the author of the book is using Paul's authority to attack them. Moreover, in doing so, the author has been more or less compelled, given the nature of the false teaching, to embrace eschatological views that stand at odds with Paul's. As we will see, eschatology is not a peripheral issue in the letter. It constitutes one of its central features.

Views of Authorship

In 1838, Ernst Mayerhoff was the first to question the Pauline authorship of Colossians. In his view, the language and style of the letter were not sufficiently Pauline, certain terms were used in non-Pauline ways, the author attacked a heresy not found until after Paul's day, and the book derived much of its teaching from Ephesians.[34] Many of these issues have remained important parts of the conversation still today. In 1857, Heinrich Ewald was the first to argue that the differences from the Pauline letters were because the letter was penned by a Pauline associate, Timothy, a view that continues to have representatives among those who see the letter as basically Pauline but distinctive in greater or lesser ways.[35]

Despite its popularity, this latter view is completely implausible. Not only is Paul named first as the author of the letter in 1:1, on two other occasions, the author—presumably not Timothy!—speaks of himself as "I, Paul" (1:23, 4:18), once indicating that he has written the greeting in his own hand. Moreover, as we will see, the problems presented by the letter involve not just the style—a serious matter in this instance—but also the very substance of its teaching. As Lindemann has pointed out, even if, to stretch the imagination, one of Paul's colleagues wrote the letter (claiming to be the apostle: "I, Paul"), Paul himself would surely have signed off on the contents. Yet it is precisely the contents that dissociate the letter from Paul. And so, quite apart from the issues of secretaries and coauthors—to be addressed in the next chapter—attributing the letter to a close co-worker appears to be a counsel of despair.[36]

The closely related view that Colossians, and others of the Deutero-Pauline letters, were the product of a "Pauline School" can also probably be put to rest. The idea of a Pauline school was first put forth by Hans Conzelmann in his important essay "Paulus und die Weisheit," and has been much bandied about over the past half-century since.[37] Even though no consensus ever emerged on the nature of such a school or the time of its inception, the benefits of the hypothesis for questions of pseudepigraphic authorship have always been obvious: without maligning authors for committing forgery, scholars could argue that close associates of Paul, who discussed and studied his teachings, produced writings in his name with impunity, much as the disciples of great teachers did in the cognate philosophical schools of their environment.

That this reconstruction is contextually untenable should be clear from our earlier discussions. There in fact is no evidence that students produced pseudonymous writings in the names of their teachers with impunity in the philosophical schools of the first century (or before or after).[38] This could scarcely, then, have been the context for the production of Pauline pseudepigrapha. Moreover, the references to Pauline authorship in these letters is not casual—a matter of an inscription, for example. The Deutero-Pauline letters insist with some emphasis that Paul himself was the author (thus the "I, Paul" references of Colossians, and the signature "with my own hand"). Whoever wrote these books wanted their readers to think they really were Paul.

Even beyond the contextual problem, one needs to ask seriously whether it makes sense to speak of a Pauline school. For one thing, we would not be talking about "a" Pauline school, but of many Pauline schools. Paul's communities, even in his own day, were wide-ranging in outlook and perspective, with followers of Paul claiming widely disparate views on a surprisingly broad range of topics. Eventually Paul's authority would be claimed for divergent understandings of such fundamental matters as the unity of the Godhead, the nature of Christ, the character of the created order, the means of salvation, the status of the flesh, the reality of the resurrection, the role of women in the church, and numerous other theological, liturgical, and practical issues. What could it possibly mean to speak of "a" Pauline school? Even in one of his earliest letters, 1 Corinthians, the one group of followers who claimed Paul as their leader ("I am of Paul") are presented as supporting views that Paul himself opposed. And this is not to speak of all the other Corinthians who looked up to him and yet advanced positions he found abhorrent.

One could argue that there were lots of Pauline schools, in lots of places, that took lots of positions, some of them in continuity with Paul and others of them not. But that in itself leads to the more fundamental question: Did Paul establish schools? We know that he started congregations. But schools? Did Paul establish places of learning, study, research, lecturing, and writing like the schools of antiquity? Where is the evidence of any such thing? Where does Paul ever mention, or even allude to, any such institution? It is fair enough to argue that the Deutero-Pauline letters evidence the oral transmission of Paul's teachings and discussions. But this kind of ongoing reflection does not require a "school." All it requires is a

church. And that, of course, is what Paul does speak about, abundantly: churches, not schools. It is in the church context that proclamation, edification, and education took place.

Paul was no professional rhetorician, and nothing suggests that students were taking notes at his lectures. Moreover, Paul believed the end was near and that the Gentile mission needed to be pursued. Why form a school? One might imagine—many have—that "the" Pauline school emerged with the delay of the end, as the Pauline churches became more firmly entrenched in the world. But here again we are faced with the pluriform nature of Pauline Christianities and the disappointing fact that nothing in the first century of Christianity's existence has any appearance of a philosophical school.

As a result, as helpful as the notion of a Pauline school may have once seemed to explain a product like the letter to the Colossians (or any of the other Deutero-Pauline epistles), the concept in the end is neither necessary nor even useful. To paraphrase Tertullian, "What has Athens to do with Colossae?"

This is not to deny that the letter to the Colossians bears strong resemblances to other literary products of the Pauline communities, especially Ephesians, and also to the writings of Paul himself. These similarities do not derive from comparable scholastic contexts, however. Instead, they suggest that here again we are dealing with an author who wanted his work to sound like Paul's.

The closest ties of the letter are to the orthonymous Philemon. The data are well known. Paul is said to be a prisoner in both letters (Col. 4:3; Phlm. 1, 9–14); in both Timothy is named as the cosender (Col. 1:1; Phlm. 1) and Onesimus is referred to as being sent to the recipient(s) (Col. 4:9; Phlm. 12). Five of the six persons who send greetings to the Colossians also send greetings to Philemon (Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas; Col. 4:10–14; Phlm. 23, 24); and special appeal is made in each letter to Archippus, one of three individuals addressed in Philemon (Col. 4:17; Phlm. 2). The conclusion reached by Victor Paul Furnish seems inescapable: these books were either written by the same author (notice: the similarities are not of the sort we found in 2 Thessalonians in relation to its model), or Colossians is written by someone wanting to imitate Paul with the letter of Philemon to hand.[39]

Evidence of Forgery

As with every instance of forgery, the case of Colossians is cumulative, involving multiple factors. None has proved more decisive over the past thirty years than the question of writing style. The case was made most effectively in 1973 by Walter Bujard, in a study both exhaustive and exhausting, widely thought to be unanswerable.[40]

Bujard compares the writing style of Colossians to the other Pauline letters, focusing especially on those of comparable length (Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians), and looking at an inordinately wide range of stylistic features: the use of conjunctions (of all kinds), infinitives, participles, relative clauses, repetitions of words and word groups, use of antithetical statements, parallel constructions, use of the preposition ἐν, the piling up of genitives, and on and on. In case after case, Colossians stands apart from Paul's letters.

Here I can mention a slim selection of his findings. How often does a book of Paul's use adversative conjunctions? Galatians 84 times; Philippians 52; 1 Thessalonians 29; but Colossians only 9. Causal conjunctions? Galatians 45 times; Philippians 20; 1 Thessalonians 31; but Colossians only 9. Consecutive conjunctions? Galatians 16 times; Philippians 10; 1 Thessalonians 12; but Colossians only 6. How often does the letter use a conjunction to introduce a statement (ὅτι, ὡς, πως etc.)? Galatians 20 times; Philippians 19; 1 Thessalonians 11; but Colossians only 3.

As a Fazit to part one, Bujard adds up conjunctions of all kind and indicates the percentage of their occurrence in relation to all words used: Galatians 239 (10.7 percent), Philippians 138 (8.5 percent), 1 Thessalonians 126 (8.5 percent), Philemon 28 (8.4 percent), but Colossians only 63 (4 percent). The average in all the undisputed letters is 10.4 percent; in Colossians it is 4 percent.

Bujard then uses another metric, adding up all the different conjunctions used in the Pauline letters: Galatians 33; Philippians 31; 1 Thessalonians 31; but Colossians only 21. But he goes further, subtracting from these totals the conjunctions that occur in all the letters in question (the shorter epistles: Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians), since these are simply common words, not words necessarily distinctive of Paul. One is then left with the

following numbers: Galatians 24; Philippians 22; 1 Thessalonians 22; but Colossians only 12. He then goes a step farther, subtracting those that occur in all but one of the letters in question (these are distinctive of Paul, not just common words). And the results remain consistent, if not more graphic: Galatians 20; Philippians 18; 1 Thessalonians 18; but Colossians only 8.

The findings involving conjunctions match those using other parts of speech. Bujard looks, for example, at the use of the infinitive. In Galatians the infinitive occurs 32 times (1.4 percent of all words), Philippians 39 (2.4 percent), 1 Thessalonians 48 (3.3 percent), but in Colossians only 11 (0.7 percent). The articular infinitive is used in Galatians 5 times, Philippians 16, 1 Thessalonians 13, but in Colossians never.

The same (or rather the inverse) results obtain with reference to the use of relative clauses. In Romans they make up 1.4 percent of all the words of the book, 1 Corinthians 0.9 percent, 2 Corinthians 1.0 percent, Galatians 1.5 percent, Philippians 1.5 percent, 1 Thessalonians 0.3 percent, Philemon 1.4 percent, but Colossians 2.6 percent.

Bujard goes on like this for a very long time, page after page, statistic after statistic. What is striking is that all these features point the same way. When one adds to these the other commonly noted (though related) features of the style of Colossians—the long complex sentences, the piling up of genitives, the sequences of similar sounding words, and so on—the conclusion can scarcely be denied. This book is not written in Paul's style.[41]

Arguments based on style are strongly supported by considerations of content. In several striking and significant ways the teaching of Colossians differs from the undisputed letters. Most commonly noted is the eschatological view, to which we will return later in our discussion. In 1:13 the author insists that God (already) "has delivered us from the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son." Already? An aorist tense? Is this Paul? More striking still is 2:12–13, and 3:1, which insist that believers have already experienced a kind of spiritual resurrection after having died with Christ: "you were also raised [aorist] in him through faith"; God "made you alive with him"; "if then you have been raised up with Christ"—statements in clear tension with Paul's emphatic statements elsewhere, such as Rom. 6:1–6, where it is quite clear that, whereas those who have been baptized "have died" with Christ, they decidedly have not been "raised up" with him yet. This is an important point in Paul's theology, not a subsidiary matter. The resurrection is something future, something

that is yet to happen. So too Phil. 3:11—"if somehow I *might* obtain to the resurrection from the dead." And yet more emphatically in 1 Cor. 15—"in Christ all *shall be* made alive … we *shall* all be changed … the dead *will be* raised." It can easily be argued that this is a key—if not the single key—to understanding Paul's opposition to the Corinthian enthusiasts. They believed they were leading some kind of spiritual, resurrected existence, and Paul insisted that it had not yet happened. They may have died with Christ, but they had not yet been raised with him. That will come only at the end.

And what does the author of Colossians think? Believers have not only died with Christ but they have also been raised with him. They are already leading a kind of glorious existence in the present. This is the view Paul argues against in Corinth. Maybe he changed his mind. But given the stylistic differences—and the other matters of content to be discussed—it seems unlikely. Colossians is written by someone who has provided a twist on a Pauline theme, moving it precisely in the direction Paul refused to go.[42]

There are other theological differences from Paul, frequently noted, all of them pointing in the same direction. A later author has taken up Pauline themes and shifted them in decidedly non-Pauline ways. Unlike Paul, this author understands redemption as the "forgiveness of sins" (1:14; as does Eph. 1:7). The phrase occurs nowhere else in the Pauline corpus; indeed, the term ἀφίημι itself, in the sense of "forgive sins," is absent from Paul, except in the quotation of Ps. 32:1 in Rom. 4:7 ("Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven"). So too, analogously, with a different term, 2:13 speaks of trespasses being forgiven: χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ παραπτώματα. Χαρίζομαι is never used this way in the undisputed Paulines.[43] So too 3:13 speaks of "forgiving one another just as the Lord has forgiven you," using χαρίζομαι again.

This author speaks famously of "filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" for the sake of the church (1:24), a shocking image for Paul; were Christ's sufferings in some way inadequate and needed to be completed? At the same time the author offers an exalted Christology (1:15–20), far beyond anything in the undisputed letters, even the Philippians hymn: Christ is the "image of the invisible God," the "first born of creation," "in him all things were created … and in him all things hold together," "in him all the fullness was well pleased to dwell." This is far

closer to the Johannine prologue than Paul. As a result, in comparison with Paul, the author of Colossians seems to have a much higher view of Christ (1:15–20) and a much lower view of the efficacy of his death (1:24).

Other differences from Paul may not be as striking but bear noting as contributing to the overall sense of the letter. It seems very odd indeed to have "Paul" attack issues of Jewish legalism (sabbaths and festivals 2:16; "regulations" involving purity and kosher 2:20–21) without using Pauline vocabulary either to describe or attack it ("law," "commandment," "justification"). This is not a case of simply expecting Paul always to speak the language of δικαιόω and its equivalents in all of his letters; in this case the author is dealing precisely with the issues of relevance to the terminology, but he does not use it. When the "law" does make an appearance—without being named—it is said to be a "shadow of things to come" (2:17), a teaching that resonates with the views of Hebrews, but not with Paul.

Given Paul's ability to mix metaphor otherwise, possibly not too much weight should be placed on the fact that Christ here is described as the "head of the body" rather than the "body" itself (1:18), though the usage does give one pause.[44] When one considers, however, how Paul imagines the life "of the body" the differences are even more striking. The Haustafel of 3:18–4:1 has long been thought of as non-Pauline, and for reasons related to the realized eschatology already noted. In particular, this domestication of Paul in his embrace of family ideals stands at odds with Paul's firmly stated preference, for himself and others, for celibacy. Nowhere in Paul's letters do we find such a celebration of standard Greco-Roman ethics; on the contrary, Paul insisted on the superiority of the ascetic life free from marriage (1 Corinthians 7). This, indeed, was the appropriate response to a world that was in the process of "passing away." Here in Colossians, on the other hand, the world is not passing away (there is no imminent crisis); it is here for the long haul, and so are the Christians who make up Christ's body in it.[45] As a result, they need to adopt behavior appropriate for the long run. Relations to those living outside the community are especially important, not to inform them of the "impending crisis" but to maintain a proper upstanding relationship. In short, this is written by someone who knows the church has been here and will be here for the long run. There is no imminent expectation of the coming end.[46] On the basis of all these considerations,[47] it is clear that with Colossians we are not dealing with a

letter of Paul, but a letter of someone wanting his readers to think he is Paul.[48]

The Function of the Forgery: The Question of the Opponents

No issue in the interpretation of Colossians has so exercised interpreters as the identity of the opponents attacked in the heart of the letter, 2:8–23. Nearly forty years ago now, John Gunther could cite forty-four scholarly opinions about who the false teachers were.[49] Two decades later, in one five-year stretch, four major studies appeared on the issue, each arguing a different view.[50]

The inability to determine the precise nature of the opposing teaching has led to three extremes among scholars. The most common is to identify the opponents with some known, marginal group (the Essenes, Jewish Gnostics, devotees of the Mystery cults); another is to invent a group not otherwise known to exist by combining features of several that are known, creating an a historical amalgam that fits a theory of the opponents better than do the known facts of history (a Stocheia cult; Christians with Essene affinities); the third is to insist that since we do not know of any group that embodies the teachings intimated in the letter, no such group at all existed, and the author's opponents are imaginary.[51]

All these views appear to assume that if there were an actual group of false teachers under attack, we should have other evidence for its existence and thus should be able to name it. But why would that be so? The author is incensed by a group of Christians who deliver false teachings (2:8, 18, 20–21); we can know some of the things that they teach, but not everything. The author certainly would be under no obligation to spell out the nature of the "false teachings" for those of us interested two thousand years later. He sees them as a threat, but he clearly knows what he is referring to better than we ever can. That should give us no reason to despair and either wildly name them or claim that they must not have existed.

The latter claim was made most poignantly by Morna Hooker in a now-famous article.[52] In her view, if the opponents were a real problem, the author, on one hand, would have provided more information about their views and, on the other, would have engaged in a more heated refutation, much as one finds in the letter to the Galatians. The second point is moot.

The way Paul dealt with one set of problems in one set of circumstances has no bearing on how a different author—not Paul—would have dealt with another situation. As to the first point, one should always be loath to stipulate how polemicists should go about their business, and there is, as Alice reminds us, no accounting for tastes. This does not mean that we should be able to identify the opponents with an otherwise known group. Earliest Christianity was far more diversified than most of us have ever dared imagine, and local views could run the gamut of almost infinite variety.

In broad terms, the opponents appear to promote the worship of lower beings of the cosmic order–the famous but difficult-to-identify στοιχεῖα—either instead of, or more likely in addition to, Christ (2:8). The parallel in v. 18, which sums up the dual problematic of the opponents, suggests that these στοιχεῖα were conceived of as angelic beings, that is, lower divine entities on the celestial scale, far below the Christ celebrated in chapter 1 as he in whom the "fullness" of the divine completely dwells. The language of "disarming" in 2:15 may suggest that these lower beings were, in the author's view—though obviously not in the opponents'—insidious, not beneficent, beings. If so, the argument compares favorably to later forms of Christian polemic that maligned others for worshiping divine beings that were in fact demons.

This undue worship of inferior divine beings is accompanied by religious practices and scruples that may have been borrowed from Jewish cult: observance of special days such as Sabbath, festivals, new moons; purity concerns ("do not handle … do not touch"; 2:21); and dietary laws ("do not taste"). For the author, these ritual guidelines may give the "appearance of wisdom," in promoting sacred ascetic lifestyles in service of the divine, but in fact are of no use in the ultimate concerns of the believer, to check (real) fleshly indulgence (2:23).

The entire system proposed by those who threaten the readers with this false worship and pointless religious practices is summed up as "philosophy and empty deceit" (2:8). This deceit is obviously not the true worship that is available to believers in Christ. Contrary to what scholars sometimes assert, the threat posed by this alternative religiosity is internal, a threat to those who are already part of the body of Christ. It is not an invitation to deconvert and join some other religion (Jewish or pagan). That is to say, it is a challenge to become a different kind of Christian—although the author

himself may have considered the "false teachers" as not Christian at all, as typically happened among polemicists standing in the proto-orthodox tradition. The opponents, though, appear to have seen their prescribed worship as important elements of their Christian tradition, not as non-Christian pagan or Jewish cult.

The author's response to these unnecessary add-ons to what he takes to be the "true" worship of Christ is, as widely recognized, already adumbrated in the celebrated Christ hymn of chapter 1, which is used to set up his direct refutation of chapter 2. It is precisely because Christ is the "image of the invisible God, the first born of the entire creation" that he alone is to be worshiped. The στοιχεῖα are among the things that were created in him: "all things were created through him and for him." Moreover, he is "before all things." He alone is "pre-eminent" and in him "all the fullness is pleased to dwell." The link between the hymn and the polemic is clearly made through the connections of 1:19 at the end of the first passage (ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι) and its loose reiteration in the second
ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς; 2:9). And so the issue in the controversy has to do with the adequacy of Christ. For this author, he is the embodiment of the fullness of divinity itself. He alone should be worshiped. There is no need for worship of lower beings of any sort, however powerful or important. And no need of secondary ascetic practices. Christ is all that one needs. Adding anything to the worship of Christ is empty deceit, merely human "philosophy," pointless and unnecessary religious exercise, and even, he suggests, the worship of malevolent beings.

In no small measure, the purpose of the letter, then, is to stress that believers who have been baptized into Christ already have complete access to him and the benefits that he conveys. They have no need of other divine beings or other religious activities. This is where the eschatology of the letter becomes crucial. For this author, those who have been baptized have not only died with Christ (as in Paul). They have already been delivered "from the authority of darkness and transferred … into the kingdom of his beloved son" (1:13). They have, that is, already experienced a spiritual resurrection. "You were also raised [aorist] in him through faith"; God "made you alive with him"; "you have been raised up with Christ."

In other words, precisely the theological feature of the letter that suggests it was not written by the Paul of the undisputed letters (the realized eschatology) is the feature that figures most prominently in its exposition of the superiority of the Christian faith, the central tenet of the letter. The non-Pauline eschatology is not a subsidiary matter tacked onto a letter dealing with other things; it is the centerpiece of the letter and the key to understanding its polemic. For this author, the believer's resurrection is a past, realized, spiritual event.[53]

Colossians then may be considered a counterforgery in the weaker sense, in that it attacks a distinct—if hard to localize and identify—set of opponents representing an aberrant view. Here a later forger puts a non-Pauline (or anti-Pauline) eschatological view on Paul's pen in order to oppose "false teachers" who do not appreciate the full extent of the salvation Christ has brought. The letter did not need, of course, actually to have been sent to Colossae, whether or not the town still existed at the time.[54] As Standhartinger indicates, the specific address to Colossians in fact seems at odds with the universal tendency of the letter (1:6, 1:23, 1:28, 2:1, 4:16). As a result, she may be right that the letter was (pseudonymously) directed there for symbolic value. Colossae was a remote, little known place; this embrace of the fullness of the divinity in bodily form reaches into the very remote corners of the empire.[55]

EPHESIANS

I will deal with the letter to the Ephesians in somewhat less detail because it is less ostensibly polemical, in any traditional sense: it is not obviously directed against a group of enemies. But the letter does take non-Pauline eschatology even farther than Colossians, and at least one recent interpreter has seen it as an attempt to correct an important aspect of its predecessor. To that extent it can be seen, at least subtly, as polemical.

That the writing style of Ephesians stands out within the traditional Pauline corpus was seen already by Erasmus: "Certainly the style is so different from several of Paul's letters, that it might seem to be by another, were it not for the fact that the spirit and nature of the Pauline mind altogether vindicate it" (Certe stilus tantum dissonat a ceteris Pauli epistolis, ut alterius videri possit, nisi pectus atque indoles Paulinae mentis hanc

prorsus illi vindicarent).[56] Evanson in 1792, and then Usteri in 1824, both maintained that its impersonal character and close proximity to Colossians made it suspect. But W. M. L. de Wette was the first to formulate the full argument against its genuineness in his *Einleitung* of 1826, an argument repeated in his commentary of 1843. In de Wette's view, the letter contains much that is "foreign to the apostle … or not worthy of him in its mode of writing and thought."[57]

A key contribution to the modern study was C. L. Mitton's 1951 analysis,[58] which laid out, in considerable detail, a wealth of arguments based on linguistics, style, literary dependence, historical circumstances, and doctrine. His demonstration against authenticity was not at all compromised by his adoption of the well-known but now discredited Goodspeed-Knox theory that the letter was originally designed as a "cover letter" for the *Corpus Paulinum*. Among the letters discussed so far, Ephesians is the most widely acknowledged to be pseudepigraphic among critical scholars, including such recent commentators as Sellin.[59]

As so often happens, the arguments against authenticity are at times far from compelling. It is widely pointed out, for example, that there is a lack of a concrete Sitz im Leben for the letter; no clear characterization of the recipients, who appear to be known only by hearsay; and no obvious situation to which the letter is addressed. But this scarcely speaks against Pauline authorship: there is no reason to think that Paul was constrained to write only one kind of occasional letter throughout his career. Was Paul for some reason not allowed to write a circular letter if he so chose? So too, it is often pointed out that the author himself is portrayed in rather colorless terms. But here as well, one might suspect that if Paul were to write another kind of letter from the seven about which we have detailed information, he may well have stood in relationship to it in a different way.

There are, nonetheless, compelling reasons for thinking that Paul did not in fact write the letter. The first and most obvious involves its relationship to Colossians, on which it appears to be patterned. If Colossians was forged —as it almost certainly was—there can be no thought of Paul himself imitating it in another piece of correspondence. Scholars evaluate the proximity of the two letters in various ways. Mitton's famous claim is that a third of the words in Colossians reappear in Ephesians. Lincoln gives more precise, though completely confirmatory, statistics: of 1,570 words in

Colossians, 34 percent appear in Ephesians; of 2,411 words in Ephesians, 26.5 percent are in Colossians.[60] Hüneburg is somewhat more circumspect, recognizing that a good deal depends on how one counts the words found in parallel passages; by his tally somewhere between 26.5 percent and 50 percent of the words of Ephesians can be found in Colossians.[61]

These kinds of bare statistics are scarcely probative; what matters are the individual instances. The passage that leaves no doubt is Eph. 6:21–22, which repeats an entire twenty-nine words from Col. 4:7–8 (leaving out just two words). Obviously this kind of parallel is impossible without one author copying another. Lincoln points out that there are three other passages that have seven words in common; these alone show that there must be a literary relationship between the letters (Eph. 1:1–2 and Col. 1:1–2; Eph. 3:2 and Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:9 and Col. 1:26); in two other passages five consecutive words are found (Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14; Eph. 4:16 and Col. 2:19).[62]

As might be expected, various solutions to the obvious literary ties of the two writings have been proposed throughout the history of the discussion. Mayerhoff in 1838 maintained that Ephesians is authentic and that Colossians was a secondary reworking of it by a later writer. De Wette in 1843 took the opposite side: Colossians is authentic and Ephesians was an imitation. Holtzmann in 1872 declared that both books, in their surviving form, are inauthentic: Colossians was based on an authentic Pauline letter, which had been used as the basis for a later author to create Ephesians, which in turn was used to create what is now Colossians. The majority of scholars today—despite the protests of E. Best—side with the priority of Colossians.[63] The most recent case has been made by Leppä: a number of the parallel passages in Ephesians appear to be elaborations of Colossians (Eph. 2:1–10 of Col. 2:12–13; Eph. 5:21–33 of Col. 3:18–19) and some passages of Ephesians appear to be conflations of disparate statements of Colossians (Eph. 1:7, cf. Col. 1:14, 20; Eph. 1:15–16, cf. Col. 1:4 and 1:9; Eph. 2:1–5, cf. Col. 2:13; 3:16; etc.).[64]

If this view is right, Ephesians was obviously forged, since Colossians, on which it was based, was forged. Confirmation comes in a range of arguments involving style, vocabulary, structure, and content. The stylistic considerations that led Schmidt to claim that 2 Thessalonians was non-Pauline speak with equal elegance for Ephesians—as well as for

Colossians, in a case that is fully confirmed and ratified by Bujard's earlier but more extensive analysis. Unfortunately, nothing of Bujardian proportions exists for Ephesians, although it is frequently observed that the style is not Pauline, with its love of long and awkward sentences (1:3–14; 1:15–23; 2:1–7 with anacolouthon; 3:8–12; 3:14–19; 4:11–16; etc.), its strings of participles (1:13; 2:12; 2:14–16), strings of infinitives (3:16–18; 4:22–24); and repetitions of prepositions (1:3ff.; 4:12–13). Again, the question is not whether Paul was capable of writing in this way, but simply of whether he did. With respect to the long and complex sentences, one frequently cited statistic is that of Morton and McLeman, who pointed out that nine out of a hundred sentences in the book comprise more than fifty words.[65] This stands in sharp contrast with passages of approximately equal length in Paul, for example, Romans 1–4, which has just three out of 581 sentences over fifty words; 1 Corinthians 1–4, which has one of 621 sentences; 2 Corinthians 1–3, with two of 334 sentences; Galatians, with one of 181 sentences; Philippians, with one of 102 sentences; 1 Thessalonians, with one of 81 sentences. Paul could obviously write long sentences. But it was not his characteristic style. One can only marvel at a supporter of authenticity like M. Barth, who suggests that "Paul himself is the man who could best afford to write in a non-Paulinistic way."[66] Whether here a secretary (or coauthor) hypothesis can best explain these stylistic data will be an issue addressed in an excursus in the next chapter.

Pointing in the same direction of style is the structure of the letter, which looks, at first glance, roughly Pauline, but is distinctive within the canonical corpus in containing both a blessing (1:3–14) and a thanksgiving (1:15–23). The word usage points in the same direction, in view of its occasional distinctiveness, although this is obviously not compelling in se. Still, as frequently noted, this author prefers the phrase "in the heavens" to Paul's "in heaven" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12), refers to the "Devil" instead of Paul's "Satan" (4:27, 6:11),[67] and uses the non-Pauline phrase "good works" (2:10). The final point—possibly the others as well—indicates a larger problem than mere linguistic preference. This author has a perspective that in many places may sound like Paul but in fact stands at odds with him, a matter to which we will turn momentarily.

Before doing so, it is important to stress more generally the strongest argument against the Pauline authorship of the letter, its non-Pauline contents. As different as Colossians is from Paul himself, Ephesians is more

so, often in the same ways. There continues to be some element of eschatological reserve here, although not as much as Colossians. Thus, for example, the Spirit is the "down payment of our inheritance until we acquire it" (1:14) and it is in "the coming ages" (2:7) that believers will receive "the immeasurable riches of his grace"; moreover, the wrath of God is still "coming" (5:6). Nonetheless, the real significance of the resurrection of the dead is that it is a spiritual event that has happened (in the past) to believers, who are already enjoying the benefits of a raised existence. Even more than Colossians, this realized eschatology stands in sharp tension with Paul's carefully developed views in Romans 6, Philippians 3, and 1 Corinthians 15. Just as Christ himself has been "raised … from the dead and made to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above every authority, power, and dominion" (1:20–21), so too the believers have also already been "made alive" (1:4), indeed, "made alive together with Christ …. and raised … up with him and made … to sit with him in the heavenly places" (2:5–6). The exalted character of Christ who now rules over all the evil forces of this world is shared by the believers who have been raised with him and so likewise rule in the heavenly places. Believers are not even said, as in Paul, to have "died" to sin and the powers of the world; for this author, they *once* were dead, before coming to life in Christ; but now they are no longer subject to the powers and forces of the world.[68]

This is not the only material difference between Paul and the letter to the Ephesians. Like its model, Colossians, Ephesians too speaks of redemption in the un-Pauline way of ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων (1:7; cf. Col. 1:14); it too conceptualizes Christ as the head of the body, not the body (1:22–23 and especially 4:15–16, which sounds very much like Colossians—see Col. 1:18 and 2:19); it too, presents a Haustafel that appears to stand at odds with Paul's radical social ethic and endorsement of celibacy, and much more like the bourgeois ethic that the Christian church had begun to adopt once it recognized that it needed to "settle down" into life in the Roman world—a reconfirmation of the lack of eschatological urgency so characteristic of the authentic Paul.

Other statements of the letter are even more difficult to imagine as coming from the pen of Paul, including the claim—key to the teaching of the letter—that Christ had somehow "abolished the law of the commandments" by his death (2:15). Paul himself, with one of his characteristic emphatic declarations (μὴ γένοιτο!), insists that he does not

believe the Law has been abolished; on the contrary, for him it is established in Christ (Rom. 3:31; cf., e.g., Gal. 6:2).

More than anywhere else, the key passage of Eph. 2:1–10 provides individual statements that seem, on the surface, to carry Pauline resonances, yet reveal themselves upon closer reflection to be strongly non-Pauline. The salvific pattern set forth here is often touted as vintage Paul: believers who were dead in their sins and alienated from God are made alive only by God's own gracious act in Christ, to be received by faith, not by "works," so that there is now no ground for boasting. Once the patina of Pauline phrases is scratched, however, the alien character of the passage is clearly shown. The historical Paul insisted in his own letters that before coming to Christ he was completely "blameless" with respect to the "righteousness that is in the Law" (Phil. 3:6). How could he now turn and say that he, like the pagans around him, followed "the passions of the flesh, the desires of body and mind?" Some such view may come from a misreading of Romans 7, but not from the pen of Paul talking about his own past. How could Paul, who insisted that believers "will be raised" with Christ, with an emphasis on the future state, declare that believers have already been raised and are in fact currently "seated in the heavenly places" with Christ, in a position of rule and authority removed from the evil forces of this world? How could Paul refer to the act of salvation as a completed event ("you have been saved") when for Paul salvation was an event to be eagerly expected, yet to come?[69]

Most important, in a letter dealing principally with the relation of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ, how could the historical Paul speak of being saved by faith, and not by "good works"? Good works? Of course, Paul himself had no qualms about good deeds or the people who performed them; nor, obviously, did this author (2:8–10). But what has that to do with the Pauline view of justification? Paul's concern, especially in contexts of soteriology and the relationship of Jew and Gentile, was entirely with works "of the Law." Paul's own insistence that Gentiles do not need to keep the "works" of Jewish Law has somehow become transmuted into a claim that no one can be "good enough" to merit salvation. For Paul the issue was not moral probity; it was Jewish Law. This author has either very much misunderstood Paul's language or has rewritten it for a new situation, in which the words may sound similar but in fact mean something very different.

That the author was living after Paul is suggested by statements that may represent unintentional slips. And so, for example, in 2:20, the author speaks of the "apostles" as a founding group for the church, without any recognition that Paul himself was one of the constituent members of the group. Moreover, for Paul, Christ is not the "cornerstone" of the church: Christ himself (not the prophets and apostles") is the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11). Finally, and yet more striking, this author indicates that the central teaching of the gospel, that the Gentiles are to be joint heirs in the body of Christ with Jews, was "revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). But is he not missing something rather crucial? Paul thought that he himself was the one to whom this insight was supremely revealed. He was the apostle to the Gentiles, and he was the one who had to convince others.

There are, in short, numerous imponderable difficulties in thinking the letter to the Ephesians authentic. At the same time, one of the other striking features of the book is the lengths to which the author goes in order to make the letter sound like Paul's—in fact, to insist to his readers that he really is Paul. Obviously he names himself in 1:1 (no coauthor here), and uses a Pauline letter opening (1:1–2). The structure of the letter is, for the most part, Pauline (with the one key exception mentioned above) and it uses dozens of "Pauline sounding" words, phrases, and ideas. Apart from that, the author makes an inordinate number of self-references: "I Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles" (3:1); "You have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God given me" (3:2); "how the mystery was made known to me by a revelation" (3:3); and "my understanding of the mystery" (3:4). He declares: "I was made a minister of this gospel … by the grace of God given to me" (3:7). He refers to himself as "the very least of all the saints" but claims that "grace was given [to me] to preach to the Gentiles" (3:8). He speaks of "my afflictions on your behalf" (3:13). He indicates that "I bow my knees before the Father" (3:14) and that "I [am] a prisoner of the Lord" (4:1). In the closing he asks his readers to "Pray … for me that a word might be given me" (6:19); he indicates that "I am an ambassador in chains … that I might declare it boldly" (6:20); he states that his readers may now "know how I am and what I am doing" (6:21); and he lets them know that "I have sent him [Tychicus] to you" (6:22).

How can a commentator like E. Best claim that this author was not trying to deceive his readers into thinking that he was actually Paul?[70] The

author repeatedly goes out of his way to claim he was Paul. But he was not Paul. He was a follower of Paul, urging a non-Pauline set of theological views, writing later. Critics at the time would have labeled the book a νόθον or a ψεῦδος—creating an obvious irony, given the stress on the importance of "truth" found throughout the book (1:13; 4:15, 21; 5:9). Particularly piquant are 4:25 ("let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor") and 6:14 ("gird your loins with truth"), given the circumstances of the writing. Other critics have more sophisticated suggestions to absolve the author of his (from an ancient perspective) moral dilemma, but they too often appear to involve special pleading.[71]

The Polemics of the Letter

The Letter to the Ephesians may seem less germane to the focus of this study than other texts we will be examining. Its purposes are not ostensibly polemical and there is no clear-cut opponent described in its exposition. It is principally a celebration of Christian "unity": the unity of Jew and Gentile together in the body of Christ as the "mystery" that has been revealed (esp. 2:11–21) and the unity of both with God through the redemptive work of Christ (2:1–10). The paranetic section too stresses the importance of unity both in the Spirit (4:2–6) and in society (the Haustafel of 5:21–6:9, along with other exhortations). There are, course, many other themes and subthemes, a good deal of paranesis, and an attempt to "correct" views that the author finds inadequate (possibly, e.g., Gentile "boasting"). But polemic does not seem to be the dominant feature of the letter.

At the same time, even though "false teaching" is not the principal concern, it is—as with Colossians—an ongoing issue, as evidenced especially in the second half of the letter, as the readers are urged not to be carried away "with every wind of teaching by the cunning of others, by their craftiness in their wiles of deceit" (4:14); they are to "put away every lie" (4:25); they are to make sure that no one "deceive" them "with empty words"; and they are to gird their loins with truth (6:14). There is thus some concern about false teaching and wrong instruction, even if the content of the error is never brought to the level of expression. It is possible, obviously, that these exhortations are simply traditional language, in a letter that is more concerned with urging a unity in the body and to encourage its readers in their lives together.

There may be a case to be made, however, that the letter engages in a far subtler kind of polemic, as recently argued in an interesting article by Martin Hüneburg.[72] Hüneburg points out that despite the fact that Ephesians was modeled on Colossians and contains, as a result, many of its salient themes, it differs in a significant respect that may suggest the author was not simply writing a letter for purposes of his own, but was trying to correct a misdirection being taken by its model. In particular Hüneburg notes that unlike its model, Ephesians makes explicit appeal to the Jewish scriptures in the context of its exhortations. When one reads Colossians carefully, in fact, without the blinders provided by the rest of the Pauline corpus, there is nothing to suggest that the exalted status of believers and the full benefits of salvation that they now enjoy are closely tied to anything like a "history of salvation."

The historical Israel appears to be absent from Colossians, unlike Ephesians, where the historical people of Israel, and their Scriptures, figure prominently. In Ephesians, the body of Christ represents a reconciliation between "the commonwealth of Israel" with "you Gentiles in the flesh." A new circumcision has been provided; an alienation has been overcome; those who were "strangers to the promise" have now been brought into the fold through the blood of Christ, which has created "one new person in place of the two." The stress on the historical connections between the body of Christ and the people of Israel in the opening exposition of Ephesians, especially of chapter 2, is matched by an appeal (also absent from its model) to the Jewish Scriptures throughout the paranetic section (e.g., 4:8, 25; 5:31; 6:2–3).

It is completely plausible that among the concerns of the author of Ephesians was the ahistorical view of salvation presented by his model, where the act of salvation brought by Christ received through the new existence effected in baptism had lost its roots in the history of salvation to Israel as related in the Scriptures. Colossians is in danger of moving into the direction of salvation without a history of salvation. But not Ephesians. Here the Gentiles have joined the commonwealth of Israel and been made heirs of the promise, all as part of God's mysterious plan (not a new thing) for the salvation of the world.[73]

In short, Colossians was not merely a text to be imitated or a kind of Vorlage of Ephesians. It was a "Pauline" book that needed to be corrected and brought back into line. There is no "correction formula" here as one

finds in 2 Thess. 2:2, possibly because the author of Ephesians saw Colossians as authentically, but dangerously, Pauline. He created a further close connection to his model through his reference to Tychicus in 6:21. But he extended its message by making the apostle now explain the economy of the salvation of Gentiles—the resurrected existence now already enjoyed by those who have been baptized into Christ—with reference to the larger salvation history of the people of God. If this view of the author's concerns is right, then Ephesians can be seen as a kind of counterforgery, intending to correct the views of its predecessor—or at least the implications of those views—in the name of an apostle who in fact did not write either work.[74]

1. Standhartinger and others have claimed that Colossians should be seen as our earliest Christian forgery, but there is really no way to date its appearance precisely, or even in relation to, say, 2 Thessalonians. See Angela Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* ("Leiden: Brill, 1999), ch. 2.

2. On whether forgeries in Paul's name could appear in his lifetime—an issue about which there really should be no debate—see p. 82.

3. J. E. Chr. Schmidt, "Vermutungen über die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher," in *Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des Neuen Testaments und älteste Christengeschichte*, vol. 2, fasc. 3 (Hadamar: In der neuen Gelehrten-Buchhandlung, 1801, pp. 383–84); the essay can be found in Wolfgang Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum 2. Thessalonicher* (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1972), pp. 159–61.

4. "In jedem Falle bleibt es rätselhaft, warum er in dem Briefe die Erscheinung Christi als nahe beschrieb, in dem andern aber davor warnte, sie nicht als nahe zu erwarten." As given in Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, p. 160.

5. "Der Ankläger ist oft selbst der Schuldige, und klagt nur, um den Verdacht von sich abzuwälzen."

6. A. Hilgenfeld, "Die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher,' *ZWT* 5 (1862): 225–64.

7. H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Neuen Testament*, 3rd ed. (Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1892), pp. 213–16.

8. *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 364.

9. W. Wrede, *Die Echtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefs*. TU n.s. 9.2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1903); Edgar Krentz, "A Stone That Will Not Fit: The Non-Pauline Authorship of Second Thessalonians," in J. Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 439–70. For a pithier statement, see Edgar Krentz, "Thessalonians, First and Second Epistles to the," *ABD* VI, 517–23 (on 2 Thess). For another, fuller overview, see John A. Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" *NTS* 25 (1979): 131–45.

0. Malherbe stresses that there are more differences than similarities between the two letters. That is certainly true—how could it not be?—but it is of no relevance to the question of whether a forgery (as opposed to Paul himself) made use of the first letter. He was under no obligation to replicate the letter in full. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), pp. 356–58.

1. Not even in closely related passages such as Rom. 8:14–17 and Gal. 4:1–7.

2. For a basic overview of the parallel structures, see Bailey, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" p. 133.

3. Ibid., p. 134.

4. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 11.

5. See pp. 218–22.

6. Darryl Schmidt, "The Syntactical Style of 2 Thessalonians: How Pauline Is It?" in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), pp. 383–93.

7. The issue is debated, of course, throughout the commentaries.

8. Among important discussions arguing for an "imminent" eschatology for 2 Thess 2:2, see Andreas Lindemann, "Zum Abfassungszweck des Zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 35–47; and especially A. M. G. Stephenson, "On the Meaning of ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου in 2 Thessalonians 2,2," in *SE* 4, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), pp. 442–51.

9. See the revival of the theory in T. W. Manson, "St Paul in Greece," *BJRL* 35 (1952–53): 428–47.

0. See the references and refutation of Bailey, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" pp. 136–37, 140–41.

1. See the discussion of Wrede in Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 6.

2. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 10.

3. Ibid., p. 6.
4. Among the better exegetical discussions, Eve-Marie Becker, "Ὡς δι' ἡμῶν in 2 Thess 2.2 als Hinweis auf einen verlorenen Brief," *NTS* 55 (2009): 55–72 opts for the first option—that the phrase applies to "spirit, word, and letter"—whereas Glenn S. Holland, "'A Letter Supposedly from Us': A Contribution to the Discussion about the Authorship of 2 Thessalonians," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: Peters, 1990), pp. 394–402, opts for the second.
5. Hanna Roose, "'A Letter as by Us': Intentional Ambiguity in 2 Thessalonians 2.2," *JSNT* 29 (2006): 107–24.
6. Andreas Lindemann, "Zum Abfassungszweck."
7. "Der 2. Thess. muss als der in Wahrheit erste Brief des Paulus an die Thessalonicher angesehen werden. Es ist der allein echte Paulus-Brief. … Der Verfasser des 2. Thess. will mit seinem Schreiben den 1 Thess. verdrängen." "Der Verfasser des 2. Thess. [will] mit seinem Schreiben den 1. Thess. ersetzen." Willi Marxsen, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982), pp. 35, 80.
8. Eve-Marie Becker, "Ὡς δι' ἡμῶν."
9. The phrase is used explicitly of 2 Thessalonians recently by Hanna Roose, in reliance on Eckhart Reinmuth, "Die Briefe an die Thessalonicher," in N. Walter, E. Reinmuth, and P. Lampe, eds., *Die Briefe an die Philipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 105–204. For the concept more broadly see, e.g., Annette Merz, "The Fictitious Self-Exposition of Paul: How Might Intertextual Theory Suggest a Reformulation of the Hermeneutics of Pseudepigraphy?" in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas L. Brodie et al. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 113–32; and her earlier dissertation, *Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen/Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Academic Press, 2004).
0. It will be seen that I am not here taking the position of Frank Hughes, who sees 2 Thessalonians as a counterforgery to the eschatological views of Colossians and Ephesians. Those views involve an immanent/realized eschatology, not an imminent (or sudden) eschatology. See Frank Witt

Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians* (JSNTSSup 30, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

1. Jewett maintains, on the contrary, that the statement of 3:17 would be a "risky method of supporting the acceptance of the forger" since it would call "into question the authenticity of every Pauline letter not bearing the 'mark' of Paul's signature at the end" (p. 6). There is no reason to think, however, that this author was overly concerned about the authenticity of Paul's other letters. Why would he care whether, say, Ephesians was accepted as authentic?
2. See Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, pp. 57–58.
3. For example, Angela Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). The most recent representative of this view is Nicole Frank, "Der Kolosserbrief und die 'Philosophia': Pseudepigraphie als Spiegel frühchristlicher Auseinandersetzungen um die Auslegung des paulinischen Erbes," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 411–32.
4. E. T. Mayerhoff, *Der Brief an die Colosser mit vornehmlicher Berücksichtigung der drei Pastoralbriefe*, ed. J. L. Mayerhoff (Berlin: Hermann Schültz, 1838).
5. Heinrich Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus* (Göttingen: Dieterisch, 1857). In recent times, the position has been taken by James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996).
6. For a list of scholars holding the various views of authenticity, inauthenticity, and composition by a co-worker, see of Outi Leppã, *The Making of Colossians: A Study on the Formation and Purpose of a Deutero-Pauline Letter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), pp. 9–15.
7. *NTS* 12 (1965–66): pp. 231–44. The fullest recent assessment is Thomas Schmeller, *Schulen im Neuen Testament? Zur Stellung des Urchristentums in der Bildungswelt seiner Zeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001). For opposition to traditionally understood Pauline schools, see Peter Müller, *Anfänge der Paulusschule: Dargestellt am zweiten Thessalonicherbrief und am Kolosserbrief*, ATANT, 74 (Zurich: Theologische Verlag, 1988); and more recently Standhartinger, *Studien*, pp. 3ff. Still more recently Standhartinger appears to give back a good deal of ground: Angela Standhartinger,

"Colossians and the Pauline School," *NTS* 50 (2004): 572–93, where she speaks of an *opinio communis* that the Deutero Paulines were "products of the School of Paul."

8. See pp. 105–19.

9. "Colossians, Epistle to the," ABD, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1.1090–96. E. P. Sanders ("Literary Dependence in Colossians," *JBL* 85, 1966, 28–45) went further and argued that Colossians 1–3 shows evidence of material that had possibly been collected from a range of Pauline letters: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and 1 Thessalonians. Leppä (*Making of Colossians*) has more recently argued that Sanders was right but that he did not go far enough; Colossians used all seven undisputed letters, and not just in the first three chapters. If he is correct, we would have a clear argument for the letter being forged by someone borrowing material from Paul's own work. Others, however, such as Standhartinger (*Studien*), are probably right that at the end of the day, there is simply not enough verbatim agreement to make the case. But as it turns out, this is not the strongest argument for forgery in any event.

0. Walter Bujard, *Stilanalytische Untersuchungen zum Kolosserbrief: als Beitrag zur Methodik von Sprachvergleichen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

1. Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke make the remarkable argument that since Col. 1:1–2 and 4:18 differ so widely from Paul's epistolary style, they cannot be forged, as a forger would be sure to follow the style, whereas Paul was free to depart from it (*Colossians* AB 34B, New York: Doubleday, 1994, p. 121). Once again, Neutestamentlers would be well served to learn more about the practices of ancient forgery.

2. It is true that there is still some eschatological reserve in Colossians, as often noted: 1:5 ("the hope laid up for you in heaven"), 1:27 (Christ is "the hope of glory"), 3:4 ("when Christ appears"), 3:6 ("the wrath of God is coming"). But these more traditional Pauline notions have been set in a broader context that is completely non-Pauline—indeed, anti-Pauline. This author maintains that believers have already been spiritually raised with Christ, a view that Paul takes care to argue against elsewhere.

3. The term otherwise occurs eleven times in Paul, never in reference to God forgiving sins: Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 2:7, 10 [tris]; 12:13; Gal. 3:18; Phil. 1:29; 2:9; Phlm. 22.

4. Pervo has made the most recent argument that the shift of the image is significant for the authorship of the letter: *Making of Paul*, p. 67.
5. On the book's eschatological reserve, see note 42.
6. One other oddity of Colossians has sometimes been noted. In Paul's own letters he states unequivocally his unwillingness to "preach the Gospel" in a church founded by someone else (Rom. 15:20; see 2 Cor. 10:13–16; Gal. 2:9), because he does not want to build on someone else's foundation. Yet if Colossians is authentic, that appears to be exactly what he is doing here (unless Paul simply meant he was unwilling to visit someone else's church in the flesh). In any event, the Epaphras who is named here as one who established the community in Colossae (1:7) is said to be a fellow prisoner of Paul in Philemon (Phlm. 23). Has the author taken a known character and made him the founder of the church? Nothing in Philemon connects him either with the founding of the church in Onesimus' house or with Colossae.
7. It is sometimes pointed out that the earthquake that allegedly destroyed Colossae in 61 CE should have some bearing on the question of the authenticity of the letter—either that it must have been written before the earthquake (by Paul) or afterward by a forger, once the community had a chance to recover. Both views assume the letter was actually sent to Colossae. But if it is forged, there is absolutely no reason to think that it was. Moreover, recent scholars such as Standhartinger have given good reason for doubting that the town was ever destroyed by earthquake. Standhartinger, *Studien*, pp. 12–13.
8. The lengths to which some New Testament commentators will go to absolve the author of any intent to deceive can be seen in the recent comments of R. McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon* (London: T&T Clark, 2005):

> The evidence from the ancient world makes it necessary to distinguish between dishonest forgery, undertaken for nefarious and malicious ends, and what might be described, paradoxical as it may appear, as "honest forgery" (p. 11). … It should be emphasized once again that the last option [that Colossians was not written by Paul] does not necessarily carry with it the stigma of fraud or forgery. That might apply in the case of a work written to propound some heretical doctrine, and as noted above many such

> works were later to be stigmatized as apocryphal or heretical, and therefore rejected. In the case of New Testament pseudepigrapha, however, the situation is somewhat different: these works came to be recognized by the Church as valid and authentic witnesses to the genuine Christian faith. … They witness to what the Church believed. (p. 31)

In this view, an "honest forgery" is one that supports the views that eventually became dominant within Christian orthodoxy. The dishonest forger, then, is one who had the misfortune of embracing alternative views.

9. John J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

0. Thomas Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Richard DeMaris, *Colossian Controversy: Wisdom in Dispute at Colossae* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1994); Clinton Arnold, *Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995); Troy Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit : Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

1. For a nice listing of the traditional views, see Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 61–65.

2. Morna Hooker, "Were There False Teachers in Colossae?" in *Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 315–31; a more recent advocate of this view is Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*.

3. In one of the most impressive studies of Colossians and its Sitz of recent years, Standhartinger (*Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*) recognizes that eschatology is the key, but she goes too far and in the wrong direction, coming up with a creative and imaginative thesis that is probably too imaginative by half: the author knows, as do his readers, that Paul is no longer living (thus she appeals to 4:3, 2:1, and 2:5 and cites Lohse, *Mitarbeiter*, p. 193; Charles Nielsen, *Status of Paul;* Margaret MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 127ff., and others; p. 3, n. 6). And so for her, he is writing a "letter from heaven" (Himmelsbrief), to encourage them in the face of his own death. What matters is not the polemic but the paranesis: be strong. As she puts it (p. 195): "the cause of the letter is not a specific theological position of a real group of opponents, but pessimism and

discouragement in the face of the death of Paul." In her view, then, "Col intends to comfort the community/ies that have been discouraged and dispersed by the death of Paul through a 'heavenly letter' from Paul, and to counter the process of dispersal that the author fears will take place. … The theological concept of this part of the wisdom movement attempts to encounter eschatological doubts with an 'un-eschatological' concept of the presentist ascent of the soul to God." ("nicht eine bestimmte theologische Position einer realen Gegnerinnen- und Gegnergruppe, sondern Pessimismus und Verunsicherung angesichts des Todes des Paulus Anlaß des Briefes ist. … Die Intention des Kol ist es, der/den durch den Tod des Paulus verunsicherten und auseinanderlaufenden Gemeinde(n) durch einen 'Himmelsbrief' des Paulus Trost zuzusprechen und dem von den Verf befürchteten Zerfallsprozeß entgegenzuwirken. … Das theologische Konzept dieses Teils der Weisheitsbewegung versucht, eschatologischen Zweifeln mit einem 'uneschatologischen' Konzept des präsentischen Aufstiegs der Seele zu Gott zu begegnen.") It is an intriguing position, but not probative, in my view, for two reasons. First, there is in fact nothing in the verses in question (4:3, 2:1, 2:5) to indicate that Paul is "dead." Quite the contrary, the language of the letter strives to assert just the opposite, especially the "I, Paul" passages already noted above. Second, and of key importance, the polemical language of the letter is not actually directed toward eschatological false teachings. That is to say, the eschatology is part and parcel of the author's discourse, but not as a response to alternative views. Instead, the author's eschatology is used to deal with a different kind of problem (worship of angels and so on, not the death of Paul).

4. See note 47.
5. Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*, pp. 15–16.
6. Erasmus, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (Basel, 1519), p. 413.
7. Much that is "dem Apostel fremd … oder seiner nicht recht würdig scheint, in Schreib-… und Denkart." As quoted in Michael Gese, *Das Vermächtnis des Apostels: Die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie im Epheserbrief*, WUNT 2, 99 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), p. 1.
8. *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951).
9. Gerhard Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

0. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians, WBC*, 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. xlviii.

1. Martin Hüneburg, "Paulus versus Paulus: Der Epheserbrief als Korrektur des Kolosserbriefes," in J. Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 390.

2. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p. xlviii.

3. Ernest Best, "Who Used Whom? The Relationship of Ephesians and Colossians," *NTS* 43 (1997): 72–96. For the older studies, see Victor Paul Furnish, "Ephesians, Epistle to the," in ABD, 2. 537.

4. Leppä, *Making of Colossians*, pp. 32–45.

5. A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman, *Paul: The Man and the Myth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), table 6.

6. Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, AB 34 (New York: Doubleday, 1974); vol. 1 (Eph. 1–3), p. 49.

7. Best tries to mute the force of this argument by pointing out that Paul too widely varies how he refers to Satan, referencing 2 Thess 3:3 "the evil one," and 2 Cor. 6:15 "Beliar." Does it need to be pointed out that one of these passages is forged and the other interpolated?

8. Given the occasional reserve of the author—there is still some kind of future for this world—Lindemann may press the matter too far by claiming that the author of Ephesians has sacrificed Paul's eschatology (*Die Aufhebung der Zeit: Geschichtsverständnis und Eschatologie im Epheserbrief* [Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975], p. 352). The Pauline eschatology has not been sacrificed; it has simply been muted and altered in a thoroughly non-Pauline direction. The view of Ephesians, again, appears to be precisely the one advocated by (Pauline?) enthusiasts in Corinth, whom Paul goes to some length to argue against.

9. See especially Rom. 5:9–10 and 1 Cor. 3:15, 5:5. The one possible exception of Paul using "salvation" language in a past sense is Rom. 8:24; but even there the entire point is that Christians have been saved "in hope," that is, in expectation of an ultimate event, yet to take place. This is precisely what is lacking in the Ephesians passage.

0. Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 12–13. Among his arguments, Best claims that "had Tertullian been told that Ephesians had been written by a disciple of Paul he would have had no difficulty in accepting it, for he accepted the Gospels of Mark and Luke

because they were written by the disciples, respectively, of Peter and Paul, saying that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters"; p. 13. This completely misconstrues ancient understandings of authorship, since, as pointed out earlier, Tertullian did not think that the author of Mark claimed to be Peter or the author of Luke, Paul.

1. For example, John Muddiman's recent solution to the puzzle of Ephesians (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC, London: Continuum, 2001). For Muddiman, the letter embodies an authentic letter of Paul that has been thoroughly edited and revised, so that there are indubitable Pauline passages (3:1–4, 8; 4:20–21; 6:18–22) but also significant non-Pauline material, all together. This is an interesting attempt at a solution, but it is difficult to establish exegetically. There is no stylistic evidence in support, for example; and the problem is that the letter is thoroughly imbued with non-Pauline views. It is especially difficult to explain the parallels to the non-Pauline Colossians under this view. Muddiman claims that the differences from Colossians show that Ephesians was not modeled on it. But the question is not why they are different. They are different letters, so of course they are different. But why are they so similar? It is not convincing to argue that Ephesians cannot be a circular letter meant eventually to come back to Colossae, since then the Colossians would have been confused by the appearance of two such different letters coming from Paul. Why should we think the letter of Ephesians was meant to show up in Colossae? Or, as I have stressed, that Colossians was? But even more, the "solution" simply creates a problem of its own by pushing the problem back a stage, making the book a "redactional forgery." Whoever added the additional non-Pauline material and rephrased the Pauline material would, in this case, have published it as if it were Paul's letter itself. But it was not Paul's. It was this other person's letter, with his own ideas and thoughts (some of Paul's retained, others of his own added) published in the name of someone who in fact did not publish it.
2. "Paulus versus Paulus," pp. 387–409.
3. Pervo makes a similar argument concerning the relationship of Colossians and Ephesians, in *Making of Paul*, p. 71.
4. A defense of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians can still be found in commentaries written, especially, by authors opposed to the notion of canonical forgery on principle. A good recent example is Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI:

Baker, 2002), who points out that it would be hard to see how those "who knew Paul would have accepted this as Paul's work so shortly after his death." This begs the question of audience. He goes on to state that "most pseudepigraphical works are apocalyptic and not epistolary in form" (p. 43), the force of which is hard indeed to penetrate. He also stresses the problematic of Eph. 6:21–22, asking the rather remarkable questions of how the historical Tychicus could have explained that he did not carry the letter, and why a pseudonymous author would ask for prayers if he was, in fact, already dead.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Later Forgeries Dealing with Eschatology

It should come as no surprise that apostolic forgeries involving variant eschatological views continued to appear after the earliest period of the Christian pseudepigraphic tradition. Once the overly sanguine expectations of an imminent end began not just to wane in some circles, but to disappear altogether, various Christian thinkers developed a variety of eschatological views, many of which stood at odds with one another. Some maintained that even though the early time table may have been wrong—the end was not to have come immediately in Jesus' generation—the basic scenario was right: the end was still to come right away, in their own time. Others contended that the apocalyptic scenario itself was flawed at the core: the Kingdom of God was not to be a future event to transpire literally on earth, but either a postmortem experience of the individual or a present reality in the resurrected existence enjoyed in the present, by both the individual and the collective body of the church. These alternative views found expression in the proclamation of various Christian leaders at the end of the first century and beginning of the second, and occasionally a writer would assume the guise of a prominent spokesperson, an apostle of Jesus, in order to authorize his position, as well as to polemicize against those advancing contrary positions.

One such forgery is the letter of 2 Timothy, written in part, allegedly, to oppose two teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who insisted that "the resurrection is already past" (2:17–18). The authorship of 2 Timothy has become a matter of renewed interest over the past two decades, as some have argued that it, unlike its two Pastoral counterparts, should be credited as orthonymous;[1] others, including one major commentator, have mounted a spirited defense for the authenticity of all three of the Pastoral epistles.[2] In view of these ongoing discussions, it is important for the purposes of this study to explore at some length the question of authorship of the Pastoral corpus, before turning to the question of the eschatological polemic of 2 Timothy in particular. Later in the study we will return to the views of 1 Timothy and Titus, whose polemical concerns lie in a different direction.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The question of the Pastoral epistles, as a group, is important historically, as these were the first writings of the New Testament whose authorship was seriously questioned in modern times. It is commonly stated that doubts were first expressed in 1807 by Friedrich Schleiermacher, in a public letter to J. C. Gass, *Über den sogenannten Ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheus: Ein Kritisches Sendschreiben.*[3] Jens Herzer has pointed out, however, that the authorship of 1 Timothy was questioned three years earlier by Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt, in his *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament.*[4] The first to assert that all three Pastorals were to be considered as a group, to stand or fall together, was J. G. Eichhorn, in his own celebrated *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. Eichhorn claimed that he had been questioning the authenticity of the books before Schleiermacher's letter appeared; his case against all three was based on historical, rather than stylistic questions.[5] These were largely the bases applied by F. C. Baur as well, who maintained that the opponents attacked in the letters were second-century Gnostics and so, obviously, not contemporary with Paul. The letters were therefore pseudepigraphic.[6] Baur's view moved toward a critical consensus with the 1880 commentary of Heinrich Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe, kritisch und exegetisch behandelt.*[7] Despite the outspoken minority of naysayers, the consensus by and large holds today, with the overwhelming preponderance of critical scholars maintaining that all three letters are clearly post-Pauline.

It should not be thought, however, that the question about the authenticity of the letters is simply a modern one. Hints and clear indications of doubt can be found among our earliest evidence. Our oldest extensive manuscript of the Pauline epistles, P^{46}, suffers a large lacuna in its missing final pages, but despite the intriguing claims of J. Duff, these have been shown by E. Epp not to have been sufficient to have contained all three of the letters.[8] Whatever else they may have contained is anyone's guess. Marcion too did not have (or know about?) the three letters, as Tertullian stresses (*Adv. Marc*. 5.21). The same may have been true of Tatian (according to Jerome; *PL* 26.556). But that is not all: around 200 CE Clement of Alexandria reports that "some heretics" rejected 1 and 2 Timothy because of their contents (*Strom*. 2.52.6) and Origen notes that

some orthodox Christians reject 2 Timothy because of its approbation of the magicians Jannes and Jambres in 3:8 (*Comm. on Matthew* ser. 117).

Supporters of the authenticity of the letters occasionally point to their use in other writers of the early church, most especially Polycarp. The matter of early usage is of historical interest, but it scarcely can be counted as evidence for Pauline authorship. Someone writing, say, twenty years after the books were placed in circulation may well have assumed that they were Paul's. After all, they claim to be Paul's. And certainly the fact that the authorship was more or less secure for centuries, down to the 1800s, is of no relevance at all.[9] The unconsidered opinion of thirteenth-century monks has no evidentiary value.

The Standard View of the Pastorals and Its Detractors

As already noted, the view adopted by Eichhorn in 1812, that the Pastorals are to be differentiated from the other Pauline letters, yet seen as a "zusammengehörende Gruppe," is still prevalent today, two centuries later. Norbert Brox states the case in these terms:

> Their unity and status as a closed group is documented further in the details, including their close relationship in terms of language (style, vocabulary), content, and presupposed church-historical situation. They speak the same high Greek, live in the same theological context, combat the same heresies, know on the whole the same organization and conception of the individual churches….[10]

Aspects of this view are open to dispute, as we will see. In particular, there is no reason to think that the false teachings attacked by 1 Timothy and Titus are the same as those taken on by 2 Timothy, and the church structure and organization of the two letters is not evidenced in the third. But most scholars continue to see them as a group of three letters rather than individual, isolated productions. In its most extreme form this view is taken to mean that the three letters were produced—and are to be read—as a corpus, as stated by P. Trummer: "The pastoral epistles are not created merely as pseudepigraphal Pauline *epistles* per se, but are conceptualized

also as a pseudepigraphal *pastoral corpus*."[11] And, more recently, G. Häfner.[12]

The consensus view of the letters was represented earlier by Brox: the three letters as a group differ in significant ways from the seven undisputed Paulines, or even from all ten other letters of the Pauline corpus. As pointed out, however, there have been lively objections raised from various quarters over the past two decades, in particular over the question of whether the three letters cohere sufficiently to be thought of as a corpus to be read as a unit rather than as individual productions. Among the detractors are, notably, Michael Prior, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Luke Timothy Johnson, William A. Richards, Rüdiger Fuchs, James Aageson, and Jens Herzer[13]—all of whom argue, on one set of grounds or another, that the letters differ sufficiently from one another as to warrant the view (at least in theory) that they may have been written by different authors. The most extreme position is taken by W. A. Richards, who claims that the Pastoral epistles represent the work of three authors, all writing for their own purposes, in different places, and in different times, possibly as much as sixty years apart.

I plan to map out a different view in the pages that follow, a modification of the broader consensus. In my judgment all three books were in fact written by the same author. But that does not mean they are to be read as an undifferentiated corpus. Each letter has its own concerns—those of 2 Timothy not necessarily coinciding, for example, with those of 1 Timothy—any more than the concerns of the orthonymous Galatians need be those of 1 Corinthians. In particular, the polemical purposes of the letters may differ. That does not mean, however, that they were written by different authors.

Those who want to stress that the three letters do not form a corpus make a methodological error when they stress, as they invariably do, that the three letters have so many differences among themselves. On one hand, many of those typically cited are simply differences of no moment: 1 Timothy deals with widows and deacons, but Titus does not; 1 Timothy deals with wealth as a problem, but Titus does not; Timothy is called an evangelist, but Titus is not; and so on. But why should two letters deal with all of the same topics and say exactly the same things?

When trying to establish common authorship, it is not the differences of two (or three) writings that matter, but the similarities. One should think of the analogous, though not identical, situation of the Synoptic Gospels. One

could easily point to difference after difference between Luke and Matthew and conclude, then, that they derive from different sources. But it is the similarities they share—verbatim agreements in telling the same stories in the same sequence—that show their literary connections. So too, by analogy, with the authorship of the Pastorals. It is all too simple to point out difference after difference among them, but so what? One could just as easily point out the differences between 1 Thessalonians and Galatians, or between Ignatius's letters to the Smyrneans and the Romans. The question of relationship hinges on the similarities, which have to be explained, however one accounts for the differences.

It is true that taken in isolation, 2 Timothy does indeed look more like Paul than the other two letters, as I will be stressing momentarily. And for a time, I too was nearly persuaded that it might be orthonymous. But at the end of the day, the evidence is simply too overwhelming that the author of 2 Timothy must have been the author of the other two. This does not mean that we can amalgamate the three and pile up statistics based on the corpus to show how different they are, as a collection, from Paul. Each individual work has to be considered not just in relation to the other two, but also in relation to Paul. Nowhere is that more important than in considering the polemical thrusts of the letters. 1 Timothy and Titus appear to take on one set of opponents, and 2 Timothy another.

The One Author of the Pastorals

As a first step in laying out the modified consensus view it is especially important—in light of the demurrals of recent years—to establish the grounds for thinking that all three of the Pastoral epistles go back to the same author. The reason this matters for our discussions here should be patent: if 2 Timothy was written by the author of 1 Timothy, and 1 Timothy is forged, then 2 Timothy is necessarily forged. Not every egg should be set in this basket; as I will argue below, there are compelling reasons for thinking that each of the Pastorals individually, 2 Timothy included, does not go back to Paul. But the individual arguments are only strengthened by the circumstance that the same forger probably produced all three books.

1 Timothy and Titus

There has been far less disagreement over the joint authorship of 1 Timothy and Titus than over 2 Timothy in relationship to the other two.[14] There are in fact clear and compelling reasons for seeing 1 Timothy and Titus as products of the same pen, many of them being reasons for seeing all three as jointly authored (these latter reasons will be dealt with later). One of them reads very much like a kind of abridgment of the other; or the other reads like an expansion of the first. There are obvious parallels between them, for example in the instructions for the qualifications of leaders, the guidance given to "older men," to "younger men" and so on. In particular, there are numerous clear and specific parallels and overlaps that are virtually inexplicable apart from a literary relationship of some kind, either an abject borrowing of one author by another or, far more likely in this case, joint authorship. I mean the following data to be illustrative, not comprehensive; but they are more than enough to show some of the ties between the two books.

The connections start at the outset, where the phrase κατ᾽ ἐπιταγὴν θεοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν of 1 Tim. 1:1 is matched by the κατ᾽ ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ of Tit. 1:3. It is virtually the same phrase, found in only these two places in the New Testament. The phrase τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ is itself found three times in each of these two letters, and nowhere else in the entire Pauline Corpus.

Moreover, the greeting to the addressee is far too close to be accidental, as nothing like it is found anywhere else in the New Testament, apart from 2 Timothy:

> Τιμοθέῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (1 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τίτῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινὴν πίστιν, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν. (Tit. 1:4)

This is the same writer, as shown by numerous words, phrases, and ideas, found in these two books but nowhere else in the Pauline corpus. Καιροῖς ἰδίοις is found in 1 Tim. 2:6 and Tit. 1:3, but never in Paul. Christ as an ἀντίλυτρον (1 Tim. 2:6) is matched by the verbal form λυτρώσηται in Tit. 2:14; the root never occurs in Paul. The phrase ἰδίους δεσπότας of 1 Tim. 6:1 is paralleled in Titus 2:9, but never in Paul. It should not be objected that this is because Paul does not have a Haustafel, since that is precisely the

problem: Haustafeln are notably absent from the Pauline letters. In the same context, the warrant ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ … βλασφημῆται of 1 Tim. 6:1 is found as ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημῆται in Titus 2:5. Elsewhere the instruction concerning the bishop, δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι 1 Tim. 3:2 is closely paralleled by the δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέκλητον εἶναι (Tit. 1:7), particularly striking in view of the fact that the term ἐπίσκοπος itself is so rare in the New Testament (only Phil. 1:1 in Paul).

The opponents of the author in both letters are teachers of the Law (1 Tim. 1:7; Tit. 1:10, 14; 3:9) who are interested in "genealogies" (1 Tim. 1:4; Tit. 3:9—the only two occurrences of the word in the New Testament), that involve ἔρις (1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9) and ζητήσεις (1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9; apart from 2 Tim. 2:23 the latter word never occurs in Paul).

The contents, polemics, instructions, and exhortations of the letters are simply too similar to think they come from a different pen, unless one author is copying another for purposes of his own. Even if that were the case, it should be noted that the copier (which would it be?) would necessarily be a forger, claiming to be Paul. But there are grounds for thinking that in fact neither book was written by Paul, as we will see.

1 Timothy and 2 Timothy

The question of the relationship of 1 and 2 Timothy is somewhat more pressing, given the forceful case made by critics such as M. Prior and J. Murphy-O'Connor that 2 Timothy is unlike the other two pastoral epistles and so, possibly, orthonymous. The arguments used to establish the point, however, are wanting, for the reason mentioned above. It is quite simple to point out the many ways that 2 Timothy differs from the other two Pastoral letters; but if one wants to establish joint authorship, it is to be done not on the basis of differences but similarities. The verbatim parallels have to be explained, and these cannot be tossed off as either accidental or, probably as we will see, the result of one author borrowing from the work of another. Here again I do not plan a comprehensive survey, but will simply restrict myself to some of the outstanding examples drawn from the first two chapters of 2 Timothy.

The greetings to the addressees in 1 and 2 Timothy are virtually identical and are unlike anything in Paul, except the address to Titus. Someone is either borrowing or the same author produced both:

Τιμοθέῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (1 Tim. 1:2)

Τιμοθέῳ ἀγαπητῷ τέκνῳ, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (2 Tim. 1:2)

These two chapters share an abundance of unusual words and phrases. ἐπαγγελίαν ζωῆς occurs in 2 Tim. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 4:8; but never in Paul; χάριν ἔχω with the dative is found in 2 Tim. 1:3 and 1 Tim. 1:12 and nowhere else in the New Testament. The notion of laying on hands—ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν—is found in the rest of the New Testament only in Acts 8:18 and Heb. 6:2, otherwise only in reference to Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6; in both of these latter instances it refers to the χάρισμα . . . ἐν σοί.

The non-Pauline phrase διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ of 2 Tim. 1:10 is matched by the μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ of 1 Tim. 6:14. It should be noted that the term ἐπιφάνεια occurs only five times in the New Testament, once in 2 Thessalonians and all four other times in the Pastorals.[15] The striking self-description of Paul in 2 Tim. 1:11, εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κῆρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος καὶ διδάσκαλος is paralleled in εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κῆρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος, ἀλήθειαν λέγω οὐ ψεύδομαι, διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν in 1 Tim. 2:7 with the odd exception of the oath that "Paul" for some reason would feel impelled to swear to his close companion. The term κῆρυξ occurs in the NT otherwise just in 2 Pet. 2:5.

The injunction τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι of 2 Tim. 1:12 has its counterpart in 1 Tim. 6:20 τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον; the term παραθήκη occurs just one other time in the New Testament, also in 2 Tim: τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον (1:14). ὑποτύπωσις occurs only two times in the New Testament, 2 Tim. 1:13 and 1 Tim. 1:16. Somewhat more striking is ὑγιαίνω, which occurs three times in Luke, once in 3 John, and twice each in 1 and 2 Timothy (1 Tim. 1:10, 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13, 4:3; along with four additional times in Titus). Particularly striking are the parallels between 2 Tim. 1:13 ὑγιαινόντων λόγων and 1 Tim. 6:3 ὑγιαίνουσιν λόγοις and 2 Tim. 4:3 ὑγιαινούσης διδασκαλίας and 2 Tim. 1:10 ὑγιαινούσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ. The latter phrase can also be found in Titus 1:9 and 2:1.

Δίωκε δὲ δικαιοσύνη is found identically in 2 Tim. 2:22 and 1 Tim. 6:11, and never in Paul–for obvious reasons, given Paul's teaching on justification (which is not "pursued" by believers!); so too ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας in 2 Tim. 2:22 and 1 Tim. 1:5 is found nowhere else in Paul and only one other time in the New Testament (depending on the textual variant in 1 Pet. 1:22).

The term ζητήσεις occurs once in John and three times in Acts, but otherwise just in 2 Tim. 2:23 and 1 Tim. 6:4 (along with Titus 3:9; 1 Timothy also has a cognate hapax legomenon, ἐκζήτησις in 1:4). So too the phrase τὰς βεβήλους is found only in 2 Tim. 2:16 and 1 Tim. 6:20. Moreover, the otherwise unattested κενοφωνίας in 2 Tim. 2:26 is found as τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίδος in 1 Tim. 3:7.

Many, many more verbatim agreements could easily be noted between the two letters, especially if we move beyond the first two chapters. But this is enough to make the point. Not only are there numerous words and phrases shared between the two books. That would be remarkable enough. But what makes the parallels particularly striking is that they are not Pauline words, found in other Pauline writings, orthonymous or forged; in fact, most of them are not words found (either at all or extensively) within the entire New Testament. There is clearly a literary relationship between these two books. And there is a good reason for thinking that it is not simply a relationship of one author borrowing the phrases of another—precisely *because* the words are distinctive to these two books (sometimes along with Titus). If one of the books served as the model for the other, the author of the second happened to pick out as the words to be replicated an inordinate number that are not found commonly elsewhere in the New Testament or Paul.[16]

And so, the different concerns expressed in 1 and 2 Timothy, problems they address, and responses they give to the problems do not require, or even suggest, that they were written by different authors, as is sometimes asserted. The linguistic parallels indicate they were written by the same author. He simply wrote the letters for different reasons.

2 Timothy and Titus

That all three letters were written by the same author should be clear from the foregoing: Titus and 1 Timothy are jointly authored, and so are 1

Timothy and 2 Timothy. This is a situation somewhat analogous to the Johannine epistles. There may be scant reason, in isolation, to think of 1 John as related to 3 John; but the reality is that whoever wrote 1 John also wrote 2 John; and the author of 2 John wrote 3 John; necessarily, then, 1 John and 3 John are jointly authored. The case of the Pastorals is even more certain because here there are so many striking similarities as well among the three, as we will see in a moment, and even between 2 Timothy and Titus, looked at by themselves.

And so, for example, 2 Tim. 3:17, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος is closely tied to πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἑτοίμους εἶναι of Titus 3:1; so too the virtual repetition of διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in 2 Tim. 1:10 as ἐπιφάνειαν . . . σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Tit. 2:13. The concluding phrase "our Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:4; 2:13) occurs nowhere else in the Pauline corpus (though cf. Phil. 3:20). The same can be said of the phrase εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν (Tit. 2:12) found in 2 Tim. as εὐσεβῶς ζῆν (3:12). The phrase μωράς . . . ζητήσεις in 2 Tim. 2:23 reappears precisely in Tit. 3:9, and nowhere else in the New Testament. Finally, the verb ἀποστρέφω is used only one time by Paul, in a quotation of Isa 59:20 in Rom. 11:26; but is used only twice in the New Testament with ἀλήθεια, 2 Tim. 4:4 and Tit. 1:14.

The Three Letters Together

The final coup de grace comes with the unmistakable and, otherwise inexplicable, verbal parallels of all three letters vis-à-vis Paul. Here the evidence cited individually above for the greetings of all three letters can be placed together. There is nothing like this in Paul, and it is impossible to imagine that the three could exist without a literary relationship:

> Τιμοθέῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (1 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τιμοθέῳ ἀγαπητῷ τέκνῳ, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (2 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τίτῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινὴν πίστιν, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν. (Tit. 1:4)

So too numerous other words and phrases. The phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος is never found in Paul, but is scattered throughout the three letters (1 Tim. 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8). So too ἐπίγνωσις τῆς ἀληθείας; it never is found in Paul but is in all three Pastorals (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25, 3:7; Tit. 1:1). The important term εὐσέβεια occurs never in Paul, but frequently in the pastorals (1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 1:1). The term μῦθος occurs never in Paul but does appear four times in the Pastorals (1 Tim. 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14; one other time in the New Testament: 2 Pet. 1:16). As we have seen ζήτησις also never occurs in Paul but in all three Pastorals ([1 Tim. 1:4,] 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:9); the same is true of the phrase ὑγιαινούῃ διδασκαλίᾳ (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1). The term ὠφέλιμος never occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, but four times in these books (1 Tim. 4:8 [bis], 2 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 3:8). The verb παραιτέομαι never occurs in Paul, and never as an imperative in the New Testament, except in all three of the pastorals (1 Tim. 4:7, 5:11; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:10).

There is more to be said, but this is enough for our purposes. There is almost nothing in these particular words and phrases—except possibly the term "myths"—that makes them unsuitable for many of the other books elsewhere in the New Testament, or just for Paul. It is not that they are objectionable or puzzlingly unusual constructions. They are simply an author's preferred vocabulary. It is possible, of course, that one author wrote one of the books, and another author decided to copy many of its distinctive words and phrases to produce a book of his own. But given the facts that all three books have numerous similarities together while each of them has similarities with each of the others not shared by the third, the simplest solution is that one author produced all three books.[17] This is especially the case given the evidence, yet to be adduced, that each of the letters as well as the corpus as a whole was probably not written by Paul.

It seems odd to find—as one sometimes does—scholars who claim that each of the Pastorals was produced by a different author without even considering, for a moment, the linguistic arguments that show otherwise.[18] Those who do advance this view sometimes resort to linguistic arguments that appear to strain at gnats to swallow camels, as in an interesting and learned article of J. Herzer, which nonetheless maintains that the ecclesiologies of the 1 and 2 Timothy are at odds, in no small measure because the phrase οἶκος θεοῦ of 1 Tim. 3:15 is inconsistent with the οἰκία of

2 Tim. 2:20.[19] What of the dozens of distinctive and virtually impossible to explain verbal overlaps? It is even odder to find, on the far other side, a commentator like L. T. Johnson arguing against treating the three letters as a group produced by a single author, in the introduction to a commentary that treats 1 and 2 Timothy as two books by a single author (in his case, Paul, also, for him, author of Titus).[20]

Sometimes scholars, such as Gordon Fee, ask the rhetorical question of why a pseudepigrapher would have produced three such books instead of just one—overlooking the fact that Fee himself thinks that this is precisely what Paul did.[21] Apart from that, the rhetoric has no force. Why do we have fourteen letters between Paul and Seneca? Surely two or three would do. Why are their six pseudo-Ignatian letters instead of one? Why does any forger forge more than one work, even if he has similar things to say? With the Pastoral epistles one could imagine all sorts of reasons for an author wanting to write three letters. 2 Timothy, as I have been emphasizing, differs more from the other two than they do from each other, and so was obviously written for different reasons. As to the other two—just staying in the realm of pure speculation—one of them could have been a draft for the second; the second could have been an expansion of the first; they could have been written to different places, audiences, or times. They could have been merely two letters out of twenty that the person wrote. Maybe five or six others were reasonably similar; who knows? The answer, of course, is that no one knows. But one cannot object that a forger would not write three letters. Why would he not write three letters? Or thirty-nine? Even if the author wrote three and only three letters, one can imagine good reasons even for that; as Richard Pervo has recently pointed out, "Three is … a satisfactory and symbolic number, implying a true collection."[22]

In short, it appears that the same author produced the three Pastoral letters. Moreover, there are very good reasons for thinking this author was not Paul. Many of the strongest reasons have to do with the contents of the letters individually: what they actually say that stands at odds with views otherwise well documented for Paul himself. But the force of the argument for taking them as a collective should not be pushed aside. If one of these letters is forged, they are all forged, because they were all likely written by the same hand. In evaluating the question of authorship, Johnson is far less than generous, or at least being excessively rhetorical, when he claims that "the main argument against authenticity today is the sheer weight of

scholarly consensus."[23] The reality is that the vast majority of the New Testament scholars who discuss the issue have read and mastered the scholarship and found that it is convincing, and have seen little reason then to reinvent the wheel.

Arguments from the Three Letters Together

It is true that bad arguments are often made to attack the Pauline authorship of the letters. It is commonly and roundly asserted that it is hard to locate the letters in Paul's ministry as laid out either in his own letters or Acts. But as Johnson points out, our hard information on Paul's ministry is extremely sparse: eight of the twelve years spanning 50 and 62 CE are summed up in the book of Acts in four lines.[24] But the arguments for considering the group as a whole pseudonymous are powerful, and we have already seen the opening gambit. Not only is a good deal of the vocabulary—terms, phrases, sentences—shared among the three letters, this shared vocabulary in particular is not Pauline.

Issues concerning the vocabulary and style of the Pastorals have been batted around for a very long time. The seemingly convincing case that P. N. Harrison made in 1921,[25] with its well-known lists and numbers of hapax legomena, was early on shown to be less than definitive by shorter studies, such as the pointed response by W. Michaelis.[26] But study after study continues to demonstrate the enormous linguistic problems.[27] The reality is that these letters are far less like Paul than anything in Paul.

This is recognized even by those who want to challenge the consensus opinion. The most recent attempt has been made by Armin Baum, who tries to explain one of the distinctive features of the letters: they violate the otherwise solid rule that shorter letters of Paul tend to use relatively fewer distinctive than common words. The pastorals have a vocabulary that is, by comparison with the other letters in the corpus, exceedingly rich; here there are approximately 20 percent more distinctive than common words.[28] This is a statistic that is obviously hard to explain on the assumption of Pauline authorship, especially when one looks at the hard data. As Baum shows, for example, 2 Timothy uses 451 different words, 161 (22 percent) of which are found only in 2 Timothy in the New Testament. In an average Pauline letter of this length we would expect only 42 distinctive words (12 percent). So

how does one answer this incommensurability in favor of Pauline authorship? Baum does so with a theory: since it has been argued that written compositions tend to evidence richer word choice than oral communications, the Pastoral epistles may have been planned as written works rather than dictated off the top of Paul's head.

It is hard to know where to begin with any such claim, but possibly it should be with the question of proof. One is hard pressed to know what evidence Baum might find persuasive for his view, since he presents it as a suggestion and so martials no argument. But what are we to think—that Paul's letter to the Romans, for example, was dashed off in a hasty mode of dictation, but 2 Timothy was carefully plotted and outlined as a literary text? Given the nature of the two letters, this seems, on the generous side, a shade unlikely. And the comparatively richer vocabulary itself cannot serve as the evidence that it happened this way, since that is the datum the theory is trying to explain.

Baum not only presents no evidence, he considers no obvious counterevidence, such as the observation of Quinn that the syntax of these letters sometimes breaks down, with "inordinately rough abrupt transitions (thus Titus 2:6–8; 1 Tim. 3:1a–b), inexplicable shifts in the inflection of verbs (1 Tim. 2:15),… sentence fragments that are without a verb or object to weld their endless phrases together (thus Titus 1:1–4; 1 Tim. 1:3–7)."[29] These do not give the appearance, at least, of being carefully plotted literary compositions.

There is more to the argument from vocabulary than a mere listing of unusual terms, even with an inordinately high level of frequency. More probative is the fact stressed so frequently, and for good reason, that some of the key terms actually shared with Paul take on other meanings—and this with words that matter a good deal to both Paul and the author of the Pastorals. And so, as commonly and rightly pointed out, δικαιοσύνη has lost its Pauline character involving justification by an act of God, and has become a virtue for the believer to pursue (thus 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22). So too "faith" is no longer a relational term, referring to a trusting relationship with God through Christ, or trust "in" the death of Christ for salvation. It is now the content of the religion (thus 1 Tim. 4:6; 5:8). In this linguistic world, the recurring phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος no longer sounds even vaguely odd.

As Harrison noted already in 1921, the vocabulary preferred by the author resonates more closely with the Christian language of the second century than with Paul. Yet more important, the historical situation of the church itself, embodied in the descriptions afforded by this vocabulary, appears to have moved far along from the days of Paul's charismatic communities. This is a factor that is completely underplayed and slighted by Johnson, who wants to see a solid continuity between the church of the Pastorals and the church of Paul.[30] What is far more salient to most readers is the radical discontinuity. We can get a good sense of "Pauline" churches from two corpora of letters, the Corinthian correspondence and the Pastorals. It is hard to see how these derive from contexts that are at all equivalent either temporally or ideologically. When Paul is dealing with the manifest problems in the church of Corinth—disunity, immorality, disorganization, false teachings, and so on—why does he not write to the leader or leaders he has appointed in order to convince them to bring their people into line? Surely it is because there were no leaders, in that sense, who could do so. And the correspondence is completely unambiguous as to why. There were no "offices" in the Corinthian church that were conveyed by the laying on of hands (or by selection) to those who had set qualifications and the ability to lead. Each member of the community had a spiritual gift that was to be used for the upbuilding of the community; each person needed to use these gifts with ἀγάπη for the entire community, being concerned not for self-aggrandizement but for the good of the whole. If they followed the direction of the Spirit there would be harmony in the body of Christ as every part worked together for the greater good.

And what does the author of the Pastorals have to say about the spiritual gifts bestowed upon each member of the community given to benefit the body of Christ through their loving application? Nothing. His concerns are the leaders of the churches, "Paul's" personal representatives left behind to organize, structure, and direct the community, and the overseers and deacons who have responsibilities to fulfill. This is a different kind of community, and it does not take a degree in Weberian sociology to recognize what has happened in the historical movement from the chaos of Corinth to the structure of the Pastorals. The expectation of an imminent end of the age had waned (there would still be a future, to be sure), the sense of living in a short interim period had passed, and disorganization and local problems had led to sensible and logical solutions; there needed to be

leaders in the church, these persons needed to be qualified, they needed to take charge and make decisions, and in particular they—not the Spirit through ecstatic utterance or the apostle (no longer living) through written communication—needed to pull in the reins on those proffering false and harmful teaching. The women who once exercised authority in the church through their teaching and prophesying needed to be brought to bay now that the church needed to be seen as a respectable institution. The leaders needed to be upright *men* admired even by those on the outside. Widows now had a special function in the life of the church (where does one find anything like *that* in the Pauline letters, Corinthians or otherwise?). Social relations needed to be normalized in the church and the serious asceticism that preferred the life of celibacy in light of the "impending disaster" had thus given way to a traditional set of social values that treasured marriage and family as solid Christian values.

It is true, as Johnson himself stresses, that the Pastoral epistles are not concerned to set up a church organization, as they are sometimes wrongly read. They are concerned with the qualifications of the leaders who man (literally) this organization—not with the duties that they are to perform. But this speaks even more for the pseudepigraphic character of 1 Timothy and Titus—the two letters I have been referring to—because these letters do not assume that a church hierarchy is starting to be established to replace the charismatic ordering of the churches of Paul's own day. They instead presuppose that a church hierarchy already is in place, to the extent that there are bishops, deacons, and widows who are to be enrolled. The author does not need to describe what each of these persons or groups does because this is already assumed. That is, it is common knowledge. These books were written well after the transition from a charismatic organization in which persons were authorized by the Spirit given at baptism. Now there are leaders with recognized skills and qualifications, who are ordained by the laying on of hands or selected from a pool of candidates.

It should not be objected that Philippians 1:1 presents us with the same situation already in Paul's lifetime. Overseers and deacons are mentioned there, but there is nothing either in that verse or the entire letter (or set of letters) of Philippians as a whole to indicate that these are persons selected for an office out of a pool of candidates, or that they were ordained by the laying on of hands. In fact, nothing is said about them at all, giving us no way of knowing whether they are comparable to the figures addressed in

the Pastorals or not. If we assume they are it is not because of any evidence, since, in fact, there is no hint of evidence; it is simply a hopeful assumption. The fact that these Philippian overseers and deacons are never addressed in the letter(s) is itself far more telling: Paul does not tell them to correct the false teaching in the congregation, or to make sure Euodia and Syntyche fall in line, or to deal with any of the problems of the church. The differences from the Pastorals are apt.

The authorities for these Pastoral communities are not only the apostolic voice, delivered in writing; they also include written texts that have been elevated to a level of sacrality. This was true for Paul as well, who used the Jewish Scriptures to that end extensively (in at least some of his correspondence), and who could, as well, cite the oral traditions of the words of Jesus. The key difference with the Pastorals is found most clearly in 1 Tim. 5:18, where not just Jesus' teachings per se but a written text containing those teachings is deemed authoritative; in fact is labeled "Scripture." Whether the quotation comes from the (now-known) Gospel of Luke (10:7) or from some other written source, the dominical teachings are now known to be written and are on a par with the Scriptures cited so extensively by Paul. Here too we are in a period beyond Paul's time, at the end of the first century at the very earliest, when Gospel texts were assuming a position of authority in the local communities associated with Paul and others of the apostles.

It is important to stress that all of these various arguments are cumulative and all point in the same direction. The accumulation is not merely as strong as its weakest link. One argument after the other simply reinforces the one that precedes: the distinctive vocabulary, its non-Pauline character and force, the post-Pauline historical situation, the role of authorities in the church including written Gospel texts. At the same time, it cannot be stressed enough that specific comments of each of the individual books as well point in precisely the same direction, reinforcing the sense that if one of these books is forged, they all are forged.

Arguments from Each of the Books

The following passages represent statements that seem to stand at odds with the views of the historical Paul, as known from the undisputed letters. In no case can one say that Paul definitely would never have made any such

statement. Large allowance must always be made for the flexibility of his thought, his ability to say seemingly contrary things, the possibility that his views developed over time, and the reality that he occasionally changed his mind, even about important matters. But it cannot help but strike the careful reader that so many of the comments in the Pastorals appear to run counter to Paul's views attested elsewhere. We are not dealing with one or two isolated statements. And so, these comments should not be treated in isolation from one another, but as a Gestalt that confirms the findings already set forth, that whoever wrote these letters, it appears not to have been Paul. Here again, my comments are meant not to be exhaustive but illustrative.

1 Timothy

As with the other two Pastorals, there is no point contending that 1 Timothy sounds completely unlike Paul. In many ways, or at least many places, it does sound like Paul, as one would expect from a letter forged by one of his later followers in his name. And there are numerous instances of verisimilitude—not nearly as many as in Titus or 2 Timothy, but numerous enough, as in the author's recollection of his former interaction with Timothy when he put him in charge of the congregation in Ephesus (1:3), his reflection on his past life as a blasphemer and persecutor of the church, acting out of unbelief (1:12–16), his indication that he is coming to pay a visit soon (3:14, 4:13); his personal attention to Timothy, urging him to take some wine for his stomach ailment (5:23); and so on.

At the same time, there are, scattered throughout the letter, comments that if nothing else create a real puzzle for those who think the apostle himself produced them. Right off the bat one must wonder about the author's view of the Jewish Law, which he declares is good "if someone uses it lawfully" (1:8). For Paul, is God's law good conditional on human obedience? On the contrary, in Romans at least, the Law is good unconditionally, regardless of how a person uses it, since it was given by God. The problem with the Law for Paul—a notoriously vexed issue in itself, of course—was intimately connected with the problem of sin, the cosmic power that compelled people to violate the dictates of God's (good) Law. There is nothing about the power of sin here in 1 Timothy. The author instead assumes that humans are able to keep the Law and thereby affirm its goodness. And would Paul say that "the Law is not set down for the one

who is just/righteous" (1:9)? Quite the contrary, that in no small measure is whom the Law is for, those who have been given the Spirit of God so that they (and they alone) can do what the Law commands, for example by loving their neighbors as themselves, which is to be done precisely because the Law, which itself is good, demands that it be done (Gal. 5:13–14).

A related matter is Paul's relation to those who promote themselves as teachers of the Law (1:7). Paul himself was always intent on showing opponents who stressed their superior relation to the Law that he himself understood it better than they, through careful and often ingenious exposition of its teachings. Here, rather than fighting his opponents on their own ground—Paul's approach—this author simply ignores the Law and refuses to engage his opponents in their views. This "Paul" does not cite the Law, deal with the "false" interpretation of the Law, or explicate the status of the Law for those in Christ.

Just as the reference to the Law has the superficial sound of a Pauline teaching, so too does the problem of false teaching dealt with at the end of chapter 1: two false teachers are said to have been "handed over to Satan" in exchange for their misdeeds, an apparent reminiscence of the incident recounted in 1 Corinthians 5. But the differences are more striking than the similarities. Here—this never happens in Paul—the opponents are called by name. Moreover, the "handing over to Satan" is not a community affair; it is something the apostle himself has done. And the purpose of the act appears otherwise indeed; in Corinth it was for the "destruction of the flesh," which may well be taken as a death curse. In this instance it is for repentance: "that they may be trained not to blaspheme." The clear implication is that the miscreants will be welcomed back with open arms once they have learned their lesson.

The oath that the author swears in 2:7 has a Pauline feel to it, but it is delivered in a completely un-Pauline way. When Paul utters his oath in Gal. 1:20 ("the things I am writing you—see, before God, I am not lying!") it is to convince readers who may well have reasons of their own for not believing what he has to say; the oath, reasonably enough, is designed to convince them that he really is speaking the truth. So too the virtual oath of Rom. 9:1 "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying." For readers who might well suspect that Paul harbors an animosity toward the Jewish people, given everything he has said in the letter up to this point, Paul avers that nothing is farther from the truth; he insists that he is not lying about it.

The author of 1 Tim. 2:7 also utters an oath: "I am telling the truth, I am not lying." This may sound like the other two instances, but it is strikingly different. Here "Paul" is writing to his close companion and erstwhile fellow-missionary Timothy, insisting that he really is a "herald, and apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." Why would the historical Paul have to swear to this? Why would Timothy suspect anything different? They were companions on the mission field together for years.

Not much need be said about the instructions to women in 2:11–15 to be silent and submissive and to exercise no authority over men. The women in Paul's churches were apostles and deacons; they were not silent in church or urged to be silent, but were told to speak their prayers and prophecies—congregational activities performed in the presence of men—with covered heads. The act of prophecy necessarily involves a woman in an authoritative position, as, of course, does serving as a deacon and, especially, an apostle. And to say that women's salvation is contingent on bearing children is completely removed from anything known from the apostle Paul. Among other things, it makes being "saved" a matter of life in this world rather than at the appearance of Christ at the end. And the idea that bearing children will somehow earn the right to be saved is not even in the right ballpark of a Pauline soteriology.

The views of marriage seem to stand at odds with Paul. It is true that he never did, in the surviving letters, actually "forbid marriage" (4:3); but he certainly discouraged it, in no uncertain terms, in view of the "impending disaster" (1 Cor. 7:27–27). Not this author. Bishops are actually required to be married men with households that they rule over (3:2, 4). So too the deacons (3:12). Young women, too, are to be married and have children (5:14). How does this coincide with Paul's wish that others—presumably leaders above all—be like him, celibate and single (1 Cor. 7:6–7)? How could he urge celibacy in one place and forbid it in another? Where, in fact, is the "impending disaster" that marks the urgency of Paul's mission and that drives his social ethics?

Is this author even Jewish? The idea that anyone would urge people "to abstain from foods" seems completely foreign to him (4:3), a sign of living in the latter days. For this author all foods are created by God and are good, and no food is to be rejected if received thankfully (4:4). Certainly Paul himself may have come to view laws governing kashrut as adiaphora, now that Christ has fulfilled the Law. But would it have seemed strange to him,

and a sign of the end of time, that there were people out there actually forbidding the consumption of certain foods? Isn't that the religion he grew up in and espoused for most of his early life? Can he conceive of the kosher food laws as not having been given by God, as 4:4 implies, even if they have now been surpassed with the coming of Christ—if indeed they have been for the historical Paul, who certainly never tells Jews that they are to stop keeping kosher?

Moreover, the insistence that all foods be consumed stands at clear tension with the advice of the real Paul himself to the Corinthians and Romans, where he urges restraint and abstention from certain foods for the sake of others (1 Cor. 8:9, 13; Rom. 14:20). By contrast, here in 1 Timothy the scruples of others are mocked and maligned. Everything is to be eaten, regardless—or rather, precisely in the face of—the objections of others. The logic and the grounds of the ethics of eating differ here, but that is precisely the point. Following the "apostle's" teaching is far more important than being concerned over causing another to stumble.

There are numerous other points that stand in tension with the historical Paul, as already noted. Spiritual charisma is received by the laying on of hands rather than at baptism (4:14); God is the savior "especially" to those who have faith (especially? 4:10); widows are to be enrolled in the church, showing that the church is becoming a social institution (5:9); the presbyteroi—a word and concept found nowhere in Paul—are rulers of the church who deserve to be paid (5:17–18); the written words of Jesus are now Scripture (1 Tim. 5:18; cf. 1 Tim. 6:3); and on and on. Again, a few of these comments—and there are many more like them—may be explained away in isolation as a sensible development from Paul. But it is the collocation of odd comments, in combination with so many other factors, that shows that this is a book written after Paul's demise, by someone living in a later context when the church is established and settling in for the long run.

2 Timothy

Even though 2 Timothy was written by the same hand as 1 Timothy, there are reasons for thinking that it was not meant to be read with it, as the second letter directed to the same situation. Unlike the other letter, where Timothy is Paul's delegate left in Ephesus for the organization—or at least the instruction—of the church (1 Tim. 1:3), there is nothing here to indicate

that he is to be thought of in this light. In fact, 4:12 may speak against the idea (Paul has sent Tychicus to Ephesus). Nothing indicates that Timothy is to be regarded as Paul's delegate in charge of a community. He is portrayed instead as a young man who needs to work to combat his youthful passions (2:22). He has been Paul's faithful companion until now, and he is urged to come meet Paul in Rome soon, and to bring some of Paul's prized possessions with him (4:9, 13, 21), as Paul awaits a second trial (4:16).

As with 1 Timothy, there are numerous passages that sound Pauline. It is no wonder that scholars since Harrison have "found" authentically Pauline fragments in the letter. But more than anything else it is the abundance of verisimilitude that continues to puzzle scholars who are otherwise not intimately acquainted with the ancient craft of forgery, persuading them that surely this must be the real Paul himself. This author remembers Timothy in his prayers (1:3), he recalls his tears (1:4), he longs to see him (1:4); he remembers his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (1:5) and recalls how God's charisma was bestowed upon him by the laying on of hands (1:6); he refers to his enemies in Asia who have turned against him, citing two of them by name (1:15); but he indicates that Onesiphorus was faithful and came to find him in Rome after rendering him a service in Ephesus (1:16–18); he refers to other aspects of his past, including his persecutions at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (3:11); he himself is about to be sacrificed (4:6). And then comes the shower of verisimilitudes of 4:9–18, where the author cites names, places, and events from his life, thereby assuring the reader that he really is Paul, before the highly personalized greetings and benediction of 4:19–22.[31]

Given the comparative brevity of the letter, and the extent to which it is consumed with establishing the identity of the author through verisimilitude, it is no surprise that there are fewer passages that appear offensive to Pauline authorship here. But there are several that bear noting. Here again the spiritual gift is bestowed on Timothy by a leader of the community (in this case, Paul) laying on hands, rather than by the Spirit at baptism (1:6). The opponents of Paul are called by name, repeatedly (1:15: Phygelus and Hermogenes; 2:17: Hymenaeus and Philetus; 4:10: Demas; 4:14: Alexander). The love of money has become one of the issues in the community (3:2; cf. 1 Tim. 6:10), which seems to suppose a more established and occasionally prosperous constituency.

In particular it is hard to understand how this letter—if authentic—could be understood as a directive to the young Timothy. Here the problem is not the general one of how to fit the Pastoral epistles into a sensible chronology of Paul's life as established on the basis of his letters and Acts. The problem is that Timothy is being portrayed as a young companion of Paul (as seen already in 2:22), who needs to be warned against the passions that commonly afflict the young. At the same time, Paul is portrayed as in prison in Rome, having stood trial once, and awaiting a second trial (4:16). The letter is often read as a "last will and testament" of Paul, prior to his death. And although this characterization is sometimes challenged—especially by those who want to urge that the letter is authentic, since often these testaments are produced as fictions after the death of the protagonist—there is clearly something to it. Paul is expecting another trial, and he is fully expecting to be sacrificed: "The moment of my departure has arrived." He knows he is about to be condemned and executed, but looking back on his life, he knows he has "fought the good fight" (4:6–7).

But how does one reconcile these two data with anything like a sensible chronology of Paul's life? Timothy is still a young man but Paul is at the end of his life? In the book of Acts Timothy becomes associated with Paul rather early on, in Lystra (Acts 16:1). He is already an adult then, and already a disciple of Jesus. He then accompanies Paul on his missionary journeys. In Paul's own letters Timothy is a coauthor of what is probably the earliest surviving correspondence, 1 Thessalonians—so presumably they have been together for some years, prior to its having been written in, say, 49 CE. Even if Timothy was a young man then—there is nothing to indicate that he was—how could he still be young fifteen years later when Paul, on any reasonable chronology, is face-to-face with death at the end of a relatively long and productive ministry? On any reckoning Timothy must have been at least middle-aged by then. But not for the author of 2 Timothy. This author, not concerned with working out a viable chronology from Acts, which he probably did not know, or with Paul's other letters, with which, for the purpose, he probably did not bother, portrays Paul in his final days, and Timothy as a youthful companion. The chronology does not seem to work.

Titus

Like the other two Pastoral epistles, the book of Titus contains numerous passages that reflect the views of the historical Paul. This again is no surprise, as the letter comes from the pen of a later follower who saw himself as standing in the Pauline tradition. And here too there are a number of impressive verisimilitudes, especially in the closing, where the author urges his recipient to meet him at Nicopolis, where he has decided to spend the winter (3:12). Like the others, however, it also contains comments that are difficult to reconcile with the historical Paul.

We have already seen that the word *presbyteroi*—let alone the concept that it represents—is absent from Paul. Here, not only are there *presbyteroi*, but the recipient is urged to appoint *presbyteroi* in every town on Crete (1:5). This presupposes an amazingly successful mission on the island—were all the towns converted, with thriving Christian communities?—and also assumes that the churches were established and hierarchically organized. No Corinthian charismata here! And, as we have seen in other pseudo-Pauline writings, here too we find a Haustafel (2:2–10) for a community that is settled in for the long haul. The false teachers who have arisen within the communities are to be silenced, not argued with (1:9–11). The author himself offers no arguments against their deceptive "doctrine"; unlike Paul, he does not reason with them and show why they are wrong. He simply orders them to be rebuked for propounding "Jewish myths"—a strange injunction if from the real Paul, proud of his Jewish heritage.

But it is no stranger than the comment that follows, that "to the pure, all things are pure" (1:15). Is that why Jewish purity regulations and rules of kosher are no longer applicable, because they are rooted in foundationless Jewish mythology that now can be mocked, rather than revered for what it was, a set of good and true commandments given to God's chosen people to regulate their lives, at least before the coming of the messiah? Where in Paul are those who keep purity laws thought to be corrupt, unbelieving, detestable, and disobedient (1:15–16)? This does not appear to be Paul the Pharisee, "blameless with respect to the righteousness that is in the Law" (Phil. 3:6). On the contrary, this is an author who was once a slave to his passions and pleasures, who spent his days "filled with malice and envy, filled with hatred for others" (3:3). And now that he has been justified, this is one—contrast Paul—who simply refuses to engage in "stupid controversies" and "quarrels over the Law," deemed here as unprofitable and futile. Is this the author of Romans and Galatians?

There is some reason to suspect, on the other hand, that the author was intimately familiar with another Pauline letter, but this one too a forgery. The reminiscence of the author's former life in 3:3–8 sounds very much like an allusion to Ephesians 2:1–10, where "Paul" begins by outlining his former life as a pagan sinner (3:3; cf. Eph. 2:3), whom God has now "saved" (past tense! 3:5; cf. Eph. 2:5), not because of "good deeds" (no word of "works of the Law" here, 3:5; cf. Eph. 2:9), through Jesus Christ, by "grace" (3:7; cf. Eph. 2:5, 8), so as to be an heir of eternal life (3:7; cf. Eph. 2:7). The author indicates that this "word" that he is delivering is "faithful" (3:8). Does he mean that he has self-consciously derived his "word" from what he (wrongly) thinks is an actual description of the conversion of Paul, in the equally pseudonymous letter to the Ephesians?

Counter-Arguments for Authenticity

Taken collectively or as individual letters, the Pastoral epistles thus have appeared to a strong majority of critics to be pseudepigraphic productions of a post-Pauline age. Yet, as noted, there have been spirited defenses of their complete, or partial, authenticity over the years.[32] The idea of partial authenticity was most convincingly floated by P. N. Harrison, in his classic study of 1921 previously mentioned. There was a clear and certain attraction to his proposal, that even though in their final form the Pastoral letters did not come from Paul, they were ultimately based on bona fide fragments of Pauline correspondence. Objections were eventually raised, however, and the theory was finally demolished by Cook, who showed that the alleged differences between source and redaction required by the theory in fact do not exist. There is a unity of theme and style throughout the books.[33]

Some scholars still find it difficult to believe that a forger would employ such extensive verisimilitudes as found, in particular, in the opening and closing of 2 Timothy.[34] The most direct attack on such views occurs in a justly acclaimed article by Norbert Brox, in which he makes a completely compelling case that "Fake personal notes are well known as stylistic devices in ancient pseudepigraphy and do not come as a surprise in the Pastoral epistles either."[35]

Other scholars have wanted to insist that we take seriously the fact the most of Paul's other letters were coauthored, and that, as a result, we should expect large differences in content and, especially, vocabulary and style, in comparison with letters, such as the Pastorals, that he produced himself. On the surface of the matter, this seems like a sensible objection, and certainly worth considering. One obvious problem is that the letters in question differ not only in choice of words and stylistic preferences, but also, quite seriously, in substance. Are we to think that Paul signed off on the content of the earlier letters without agreeing on what they actually had to say?

There is, however, a larger problem with the assertion that coauthored letters will naturally differ from single-author letters. Where is the evidence? Luke Timothy Johnson has asserted that this solution can explain why the Pastorals may differ so much from the other Pauline letters.[36] But he offers not a shred of proof. This is odd for many reasons, not least of which is the fact that Johnson has made an outstanding career out of showing how parallels in the Greco-Roman environment can illuminate the writings of the New Testament in terms of genre, theme, vocabulary, rhetoric, and so on. The similarities of the New Testament literature with the literature of its surroundings provide lasting insights into its character and the force of its rhetoric. But when it comes to the Deutero-Pauline letters, Johnson wants to argue that the key to their interpretation is a phenomenon for which he cannot—or at least does not—cite a single parallel or analogy from antiquity: joint composition of letters (or in modern parlance, composition by committee). Why would this explanation for the distinctive character of the Deutero-Pauline letters be preferable to one for which there are abundant parallels and analogies scattered throughout all of antiquity, the use of literary forgery?

Something similar can be said of Michael Prior's use of the same argument in his study of 2 Timothy. Prior, at least, does try to find some evidence. After a diligent search, he locates some eighteen instances of coauthored letters from various ancient sources, mainly the papyri. After examining them, he then states "we have no way of knowing how the letters were composed, or what part each member of the coauthorship team played." That is precisely right: we literally have not a single clue. But then, in the very next sentence, Prior claims, "The indications are that the writers are on an equal footing."[37] But what indications would those be, if the examples do not give us any clues? Later, coming to the Pauline corpus,

Prior asserts, "When seen against the background of ancient co-authored letters one would expect a real coauthorship for those letters."[38] Yet he provides no analysis of the "ancient co-authored letters" that would lead us to think that they should appear stylistically or materially different from single-authored letters.[39] This is a case made by assertion. If there is evidence to be adduced, then someone ought to adduce it. Until that happens, historians should be loath to accept as the "most probable" assertion one that has no demonstrable ancient analogy, in preference to what is abundantly attested in myriad places, that forgers produced works that differed stylistically and materially from those of the authors in whose name they wrote.

The Polemic of 2 Timothy

The polemical attack on false teachers is a prominent feature of all three Pastoral letters. By Johnson's count, 47 of the 242 verses of the books are involved with polemic.[40] As Donelson states, "all three letters are peppered with warnings about false teachers… [who] appear to be the immediate occasion for writing the letters."[41] The polemic is especially evident in 1 Timothy and Titus, as it appears at the very outset of each letter (1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:9–16); and at its conclusion (1 Tim. 6:20–21; Tit. 3:9–11), with scattered references, then, throughout. 2 Timothy is also littered with polemical statements and warnings. The opening section ends with the exhortation to "guard the good deposit that comes from the Holy Spirit that dwells in you" (1:14). The author is concerned that his teachings be "entrusted to faithful ones" who can teach others as well (2:2). The heart of the body of the letter involves the specific issue of greatest concern to the author, the false teachings of those who insist that the "resurrection has already happened" (2: 14–19) to which we will return momentarily. The false teachers are to be corrected, but not engaged (2:23–26), as they promote the work of "the devil" (2:26). These opponents appear closely connected with (identical with?) the moral reprobates about to appear in the last days (3:1–9). Other eschatological warnings involve false teaching in se, as members of the congregation will not endure "healthy teaching" but follow teachings that they prefer, turning from the "truth" in order to "stray after myths." Already the opposition is in full force, as evidenced by

Alexander who "strongly opposed our words" and thus did the author "great harm" (4:14–15).

As stressed repeatedly above, the facts that the Pastorals were probably written by the same hand and that all engage in polemics should not be taken to mean that the polemical target is the same in all three letters, any more than the opponents of Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Philippians are necessarily all the same. No one today would (or should) think of creating an amalgamation of Paul's polemical statements in these three letters to create some kind of hybrid opponent who embodied the negative characteristics intimated in each. Why scholars have been so eager to do so with the Pastorals is a mystery. The resulting amalgam is usually some kind of otherwise unknown group of "Jewish Gnostics," or occasionally some other interesting mixed bag, such as Spicq's converted Jews who use rabbinic and Hellenistic modes of interpretation of Scripture and privilege the Torah.[42] This passion for conflation is virtually ubiquitous in the literature, from authors as wide ranging as Robert Karris, Günter Haufe, Josef Zmijewski, I. Howard Marshall, and Lewis Donelson.[43] The real problem with this approach is not simply that the resultant composite picture does not resemble any known teacher or group; the same could be said even of unitary presentations of false teachers, such as that found in 3 Corinthians. The deeper problem is that there is in fact nothing in the letters themselves to make one think that the problems addressed in 2 Timothy are the same as those addressed in 1 Timothy and Titus, as scholars such as Johnson and Prior have recognized. As Murphy-O'Connor has stated the matter: "Nowhere has the assumption of the unity of the Pastorals been more pernicious than in treatments of the errors they oppose."[44]

Jerry Sumney has performed a particularly useful service of isolating the polemic of each of the letters and seeing from a minimalist view what each one has to say about the opponents.[45] Sumney can probably be faulted for being even too minimalist, in that he underreads some of the passages and does not see the close ties between 1 Timothy and Titus once the analysis is completed (every objection to the opponents of Titus can be found in 1 Timothy as well). I will later maintain that 1 Timothy and Titus are directed toward the same opponents. But nothing links them to the opponents addressed in 2 Timothy.

There are basic similarities in the unpleasant things said about the two groups. Like the opponents of the other Pastorals, those in 2 Timothy are full of vice (3:1–6); they dispute over words (2:14, 23); they are corrupted in mind and un-proven in faith (3:8); and they turn aside to myths (4:4). There is nothing to indicate that these myths are Jewish teachings about the Law, as found in 1 Timothy and Titus. All of these polemical statements in fact are stock phrases that give us no real indication of what it is, exactly, these false teachers were teaching, a matter stressed years ago in an important article of Robert Karris.[46]

Other statements in the course of the polemic are more targeted and can provide us with some indication of who these false teachers were and what they proclaimed. For one thing, the author, in a clear departure from Pauline practice, actually names them. They are Hymenaeus and Philetus: persons, therefore, known, if only fictionally, to both the (fictional) audience and author. But since they are named, even if fictionally, it means that the author imagines the opposition to have arisen within the community among persons who are known. Moreover, some of the polemic directed against them is not simply undifferentiated slander. Since they are said to have swerved from the truth, they, again, are being conceived of as insiders, not external threats (2:18); so too the comment that they have been ensnared by the devil, which implies they had previously led an unensnared existence (2:26). What is more, they have misled others in the community (2:18), but they still have the chance to repent and come to know the truth (2:25). Most important is that their specific error is named directly: they maintain that "the resurrection has already happened" τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἤδηγεγονέναι (2:18).

Hints that this was to be the problem with the false teaching came earlier, though they were left unflagged, especially in the pithy summary of the "Pauline credo" in 2:11–13, with its neat repetition of future tenses at the appropriate moments: "if we died with him [aorist] we also will live with him [future]; if we endure we will also reign with him [future]; if we should deny him, even that one will deny us [future]." Paul himself could scarcely have said it better, and one is right to suspect the influence of a passage such as Rom. 6:5, 8.

As we saw earlier, this very Pauline insistence that the believer's death with Christ, in baptism, was past, but the future resurrection with Christ is yet future, formed the heart of the polemic against Paul's opponents in Corinth, who appear to have believed that they had already experienced the

benefits of the resurrection in the present.[47] The irony, as we also saw, is that the later authors of Colossians and, especially, Ephesians appear to have developed their views precisely along the lines of these opponents of Paul in Corinth. As the author of Colossians expresses it, "You who were dead in the transgressions and uncircumcision of the flesh, God made you alive with him (aorist: συνεζωοποίησεν; 2:13; cf. the future συζήσομεν in 2 Tim. 2:11); or, as Ephesians states the matter yet more emphatically, "Even though we were dead in transgressions, he made us alive in Christ (same word in the aorist: συνεζωοποίησεν), and he raised us (aorist: συνήγειρεν) and seated us (aorist: συνεκάθισεν) in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5–6).[48]

This is not a peripheral matter for any of these authors. Paul himself is quite emphatic that the death with Christ is a past event for those who have been baptized, but the resurrection with Christ is not to be thought of until Christ himself returns from heaven and the transformation of the mortal body takes place. That is clearly asserted in Romans 6 and stressed in 1 Corinthians 15. The reason for the emphasis in the latter passage is that it is directly related to Paul's opponents. Within his own community at Corinth the opposition was conceivably claiming his proclamation in support: nothing indicates that they saw themselves as standing in opposition to him or as outside of the tradition which he began. The writers of Colossians and Ephesians, like the opponents in Corinth, have also taken a Pauline datum —in Christ "all things are new" (see 2 Cor. 5:17)—and moved it in a non-Pauline direction, insisting that the resurrection had already occurred, even if there was more yet to come. But believers are already raised with Christ and are ruling with him in the heavenly places. They already are enjoying the benefits of the resurrected existence. The resurrection has occurred for those who are in Christ.

This in turn is just the position that the author of 2 Timothy opposes. The resurrection is not a past spiritual event. It is a future physical one. Those who think the eschatological moment is past have been ensnared by a false, non-Pauline teaching. They may deliver an attractive perspective, but it will lead people astray. The polemic against people engaging in vice (3:1–6)—standard and stock as it is—may be germane here. Throughout proto-orthodox polemic against firmly realized eschatology one sees the logic, not that the opponents used, but that the polemic demands: the devaluing of the physical life in the flesh is connected with abuses of the flesh.

What is particularly intriguing is the circumstance that, as we have already seen, this author appears to be familiar with "Paul's" letter to the Ephesians. The evidence derives not only from the previously discussed restatement of Eph. 2:1–10 in Tit. 3:3–8, but also from 2 Timothy, as it is widely, and with good reason, thought that 4:12 (I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus) betrays knowledge of Eph. 6:21–22 ("Tychicus … will tell you everything; I have sent him to you"). If so, this is yet another indication, as if more is needed, that 2 Timothy is forged. Paul himself could scarcely have been expected to rely on a pseudepigraphon produced in his name.

But even if the author of 2 Timothy found Ephesians of some use for his own letter, he stood directly opposed to the eschatology that it presented. One might well suspect that what we have here is a correction of an earlier "aberrant" view in circulation in Paul's name, written, allegedly, by the apostle himself. It should be recalled that the author of 2 Timothy indicates that the eschatological error arose among Paulinists within the Pauline community, among people who, evidently, claimed Pauline support. At least this much can be said for the author of Ephesians. But the later Paulinist resisted this strain of Pauline thought by embracing another, one which, as it turns out, could find clear support in letters later judged by scholars to be orthonymous. The end has not come; the resurrection has not occurred. On the contrary (this is where the author differs from Paul himself), the church needs to settle in for the long haul, and establish itself as an efficiently working community characterized by "true" teaching.

The possibility that 2 Timothy presents us with a counterforgery was recognized already by Lindemann.[49] The author of the book does not provide us with a vague rejection of some kind of fantasized Gnostic teaching of the resurrection. He opposes a teaching that had arisen within the circles that the author himself is addressing, Pauline communities that had taken Paul's teaching of the "new creation" in Christ in the wrong direction and to a false extreme, in arguing that the resurrection is a spiritual event that had already occurred. For the author of 2 Timothy, this is non-Pauline, devilish, and wrong. The resurrection is a future event, yet to be experienced, notwithstanding "Pauline" letters, such as Ephesians, that indicate otherwise.

EXCURSUS: THE SECRETARY HYPOTHESIS

Now that we have explored six of the Deutero-Pauline epistles, we are in a position to consider the hypothesis widely invoked by advocates of authenticity to explain how a letter allegedly by an author should differ so radically from other writings he produced. The notion that early Christian authors used secretaries who altered the writing style and contributed to the contents of a writing—thereby creating the anomalies that arouse the critics' suspicion—is so widespread as to be virtually ubiquitous. There is no need here to cite references; one need only consult the commentaries, not only on the Pauline corpus but on 1 and 2 Peter as well. At the same time, almost no one who invokes the secretary hypothesis sees any reason to adduce any evidence for it. Instead, it is simply widely assumed that since authors used secretaries—as Paul, at least, certainly did (Rom. 16:22; Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11)—these otherwise unknown persons contributed not only to the style of a writing but also to its contents. There is a good reason that commentators who propose the hypothesis so rarely cite any evidence to support it. The ancient evidence is very thin, to the point of being nonexistent.

The fullest study is by E. Randolph Richards, who is to be commended for combing all the literary sources and papyri remains in order to uncover everything that can reasonably be said about secretaries and their functions in the Roman world during our period.[50] He explores every reference and allusion in the key authors: Cicero, Pliny, Plutarch, Suetonius, and so on. He plows through all the relevant material remains from Oxyrhynchus and elsewhere. It is a full and useful study, valuable for its earnest attempt to provide the fullest accounting of evidence possible. Somewhat less commendable are the conclusions that Richards draws, at times independently of this evidence.

Richards maintains that secretaries in antiquity could function in four ways: as recorders of dictation; as copy editors who modified an author's style; as coauthors who contributed both style and content; and as composers who produced a letter from scratch, at the instruction of the "author."

The first category is both abundantly attested in the sources and completely nonproblematic. Secretaries often took dictation, either syllabatim or, if they had the requisite tachygraphic skills, viva voce. If Paul dictated a letter like Romans, his secretary Tertius simply wrote down what he was told, making himself known only in his somewhat temerarious

insertion of 16:22. Otherwise he recorded the words as Paul spoke them. Whether Paul was composing orally or dictating from written drafts is another question, but of no relevance to the present issue. The words on the page are the words Paul spoke, in his style.

It is with the second category that the significance and the evidence begin to move in opposite directions. If secretaries regularly edited the dictations they received, possibly taking down a draft by dictation and then reworking it into a style they preferred, then all sorts of options would open up for early Christian writings deemed pseudepigraphic on stylistic grounds. The differences between Colossians and the undisputed Paulines could be explained, as would the discrepancies between 1 and 2 Peter. What, then, is the evidence? And is it directly relevant?

Unlike the first category, the evidence that secretaries routinely reworked letters for style is very thin indeed. All of it derives from the very upper reaches of the Roman highest classes, among authors who used highly educated and skilled writers in helping them produce their correspondence. There is a serious question of how such data are relevant for a completely different social context, with the impoverished and lower-class authors of the Christian writings. Still, it is worth noting that Cicero, at least, appears to have allowed Tiro on occasion to assist him in stylistically shaping his letters. And Cicero suggests that the secretary of Atticus, Alexis, may have helped him similarly.[51] Moreover, Cicero speaks of one letter of Pompey that appears to have been written (or rewritten?) instead by Sestius, and intimates that Sestius wrote other writings in his name (mildly castigating Pompey for this proceeding).[52] Finally, there is an off-the-cuff comment in the handbook on style by Philostratus that the letters of Brutus may have been stylized by the secretary he used. This is not so much evidence for the historical Brutus (from three hundred years earlier) as evidence of what would have seemed culturally plausible in this later period.[53]

This evidence is notably sparse, but it does indicate that a secretary would occasionally edit an author's letter stylistically. Could this not explain, then, why Colossians differs so significantly (in style) from the other Pauline letters? Or why 1 and 2 Peter are so different from one another? Several points should be stressed. First, as already mentioned, the evidence all derives from fabulously wealthy, highly educated, upper-class elites with very highly trained secretaries. We have no evidence at all for the kinds of letters being dictated by a Paul, or, even more, by an illiterate

Aramaic-speaking peasant such as Peter.[54] Second, the kinds of writings in question may be incommensurate. The vast majority of letters in Greco-Roman antiquity were very short and to the point. The letters of the papyri appear to average fewer than a hundred words; at the other end of the spectrum, letters of Cicero averaged around three hundred words, Seneca's around a thousand. The letters of Paul are much longer, on average about twenty-five hundred words.[55] What really matters, however, is not simply length, but complexity. The Christian letters we have examined so far in this study are not simply pieces of correspondence: they are complicated theological and paranetic treatises, with interwoven themes and subthemes, and intricate modes of argumentation, written in letter form. Apart from purely formal features (address, thanksgiving, body, closing, etc.) they are simply not like typical Greco-Roman letters, precisely because of what happens in the "body." What evidence is there that secretaries were ever given the freedom to rewrite this kind of letter—an extended treatise in letter form—in accordance with their preferred style? As far as I know, there is no evidence.

This latter point relates to the third. The kinds of "minor corrective editing" that Richards finds, for example, in the case of Tiro and Cicero[56] is far removed from the complete rewriting of the letters that would have been necessary to make an Ephesians or Colossians come in any sense from the hand of Paul. Here there are wholesale changes of style at every point. Where is the evidence that copy editing ever went to this extreme? If any exists, Richards fails to cite it.

Finally, it should be noted that in none of the instances we have considered so far, and in none of the ones we will consider throughout this study, are questions of style the only features of the letter that have led scholars to suspect forgery. The most definitive demonstration of a non-Pauline style comes with Colossians, and even there it was the content of the letter that confirmed that it was not written by Paul. Moreover, it should be stressed that the person actually writing the letter also repeatedly claims not to be a secretary but to be Paul himself ("I, Paul").

It is Richards's third and fourth categories that are particularly germane to the questions of early Christian forgery. What is the evidence that secretaries were widely used, or used at all, as coauthors of letters or as ersatz composers? If there is any evidence that secretaries sometimes joined an author in creating a letter, Richards has failed to find or produce it. The

one example he considers involves the relationship of Cicero and Tiro, cited earlier by Gordon Bahr as evidence for co-authorship. In Bahr's words "Tiro took part in the composition of the letter."[57] But Richards points out that Bahr cites no evidence to support this claim, opting instead simply to assert the conclusion. Moreover, there is nothing stylistically in the Ciceronian correspondence to suggest a coauthorship. Richards concludes that at most Tiro sometimes engaged in "minor corrective editing." What is oddest in Richards' discussion, however, is the conclusion that he draws, once he discounts the evidence of Cicero, the one and only piece of evidence he considers: "Evidently then,… secretaries were used as co-authors."[58] It is not at all clear what makes this view "evident," given the circumstance that he has not cited a solitary piece of evidence for it.

There is better evidence that an author would sometimes commission someone else to write a letter in his name. This typically happened among the illiterate, who would hire a scribe for any necessary written communications. But this involved stock letters and documents, stereotyped and brief, of no relevance to the situation we are addressing with the early Christian pseudepigrapha. What about longer letters of some substance? Here there is at least some evidence, although all of it is connected with one author (out of how many?), Cicero. At one time Cicero asks Atticus "to write in my name to Basilius and to anyone else you like, even to Servilius, and say whatever you think fit." And in doing so he even urges Atticus to employ a deceit: "If they look for [my missing] signature or handwriting, say that I have avoided them because of the guards."[59] In addition to these passages, Richards places a good deal of weight on a letter of Rufus, a friend of Cicero who had promised to write him during his exile of 51 CE with news of Rome. Rufus indicates that he was too busy to fulfill his promise, and so "delegated the task to another."[60] This was a long and involved communication, and so is more like, in some respect, the lengthy letters of the early Christians we have been considering.

The problem is that the passage does not say what Richards says it says. Rufus never claims that he had someone else compose the account *in his own name*. He simply had someone else compose the account. That, of course, is a different matter altogether.[61]

And so, from all of antiquity, we are left with a few references to a secretary composing a letter in connection with Cicero. These references

show that Cicero realized the practice was deceitful (he instructs Atticus to lie about the matter). Moreover, the correspondence involved short, stereotypical letters, not complex treatises in letter form. But is the evidence sufficient to establish a typical practice in antiquity of secretary-composed writings? Richards himself does not think so, as he repeatedly emphasizes: "Nowhere was there *any* indication that an ordinary secretary was asked, much less presumed, to compose a letter for the author…. [O]ne cannot assume that [Cicero's] use of such a questionable secretarial method is indicative of an acceptable custom of the day… [T]his secretarial method probably should not even be considered a valid option."[62]

What, on balance, is the evidence to support the secretary hypothesis to explain the early Christian pseudepigrapha? That secretaries took dictation in a variety of ways is clear and certain. This creates no problem for authorship: the author delivered an oral communication that was written down word-for-word by an amanuensis who simply performed the task of recording. In addition, on rare occasions members of the upper-crust elite used their resources to hire highly literate secretaries to copyedit their letters in places. There is no evidence that this ever happened in other cultural settings, with, say, the poorer lower classes. Moreover, there is not a shred of evidence, at least none that Richards has been able to locate, to indicate that secretaries sometimes coauthored a letter. What is the evidence that secretaries actually composed letters in another person's name? Apart from a completely different phenomenon—the use of a scribe by illiterate persons to produce documents (wills, land deeds, sales contracts, etc.) or very brief stereotyped communications—the evidence appears to be limited to a few instances from the end of the life of Cicero, who admits that the practice involved a deceit, that is, that it was tantamount to forgery, willingly engaged in because of the impossible constraints placed upon his time.

In sum, what might we conclude about the evidence for the secretary hypothesis put forth by commentators wanting to affirm the authenticity of the Deutero-Pauline or Petrine letters of the New Testament? It is thin at best, almost nonexistent. Why then is the hypothesis so universally invoked? If it is not because of the evidence, it must be for other reasons, and one can only suspect that it involves wishful thinking. History, however, proceeds on the basis of evidence. What evidence exists, on the other hand, for the contrary position, that ancient authors forged writings in

the names of other well known persons, not successfully replicating their style and producing anomalous content? That kind of evidence can be found all over the map. Scholars must constantly ask themselves whether evidence matters, that is, whether they prefer history or romance.

SECOND PETER

To this point we have considered only Deutero-Pauline letters in our query into forgeries produced to counter eschatological views that were deemed aberrant. "Aberrant" eschatology affected other writings as well, into the second century, including one that is distantly related to Paul, not because he is claimed as its author, but because its pseudonymous author, "Peter," appealed to Paul's support in opposition to the false eschatological teachings he addressed. The book of 2 Peter is a polemical treatise written to oppose Christians who maintained that there would be no future apocalyptic moment in which Jesus would return to right all that was wrong with the world. Unlike the "Pauline" letters we have considered so far, there is very little debate in this instance concerning authorship. More than any other New Testament writing, 2 Peter is widely recognized to be forged, even among scholars otherwise loath to admit the presence of pseudonymous works within the canon of Scripture.

2 Peter as Forgery

2 Peter is among the least well attested works of the New Testament from Christian antiquity, although it is found already in P^{72}, ca. 300 CE, along with 1 Peter and Jude, the two canonical letters with which it is most closely associated. Still, during the first four centuries the book had an unsettled status among those interested in establishing the contours of the New Testament. Origen doubted its authenticity, in words quoted by Eusebius: "Peter … left us one acknowledged epistle, possibly two—though this is doubtful" (*H.E*. 6.25.8). Eusebius himself also considered 1 Peter genuine, but rejected 2 Peter, even though, as he notes, some readers have found it valuable: "Of Peter, one epistle, known as his first, is accepted, and this the early fathers quoted freely, as undoubtedly genuine…. But the second Petrine epistle we have been taught to regard as uncanonical" (*H.E*. 3.3.1). Somewhat later Jerome expressed the opinion of

his day: "[Peter] wrote two epistles which are called Catholic, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be his."[63] Most emphatic was Didymus the Blind, who indicated, "We must therefore not be ignorant of the fact that the epistle at hand is forged, which, even though published, is nevertheless not in the canon."[64]

Those modern scholars who do not share this concern with establishing the contours of the canon nonetheless agree with these ancient assessments of 2 Peter and often use the same faulty logic in support, that the book differs so significantly from 1 Peter that it could not have been written by the same author.[65] The flaw in the logic, as we will see, is that Peter probably did not write the first epistle either, so that variations from it say nothing, per se, about whether he wrote the second. Nonetheless, there are compelling reasons for thinking that 2 Peter came into existence long after the death of Jesus' disciple, and that it is simply one of a stack of a books that eventually appeared in his name. Still extant are the Gospel of Peter, the Epistula Petri of the Pseudo-Clementines, the Letter of Peter to Philip from Nag Hammadi, three apocalypses of Peter—all falsely claiming to be written by the great apostle. We will later see that Peter could not have written any of these books (no one, of course, claims that he did); but I will reserve that discussion for my assessment of 1 Peter, the one book scholars have been most inclined to consider authentic.

The grounds for considering 2 Peter a forgery are varied and numerous. The first has to do with the quality of the Greek. Even if we assume that Peter could write in Greek, an assumption I will challenge in the chapter that follows, it seems highly doubtful that he could have written Greek like this.[66] The style is widely assessed as overly elaborate, and the vocabulary is excessively rich. As Bauckham puts it, the author is "fond of literary and poetic, even obscure words."[67] This is not what one would expect of an Aramaic-speaking peasant.[68] By Elliott's count, there are proportionally more hapax legomena in 2 Peter than in any other writing of the New Testament: 58 of its 402 words (14.4 percent).[69]

In addition, there are the clear indications that the book was written in a later period, after the death of the apostles. Most obviously, it was written in order to deal with the massive delay of the parousia: there had been a long passage of time since Christians widely held to the expectation of an

imminent end of all things, a problem dealt with in a variety of ways by other postapostolic writings, such as Luke-Acts and the Fourth Gospel. In particular we are told that "the fathers" have "fallen asleep" (i.e., died) since the original promises of the coming end (3:4). Moreover, when the author is speaking in character, he feigns a knowledge of his own approaching death, based in part on a prediction of Jesus himself (1:12–14; see, for example the post-Petrine John 21:18–19 as well), giving this book, as widely recognized, the character of a testamentary fiction.[70] He "knows" of his impending death and wants to give his readers his final instructions. As with all Testaments, this is a fiction put on the pen of someone already residing comfortably in his tomb.

Moreover, the author's knowledge of earlier Christian texts indicates that he was writing after the death of Peter. Most obviously, he makes extensive use of the letter of Jude. By Elliott's count, nineteen of Jude's twenty-five verses reappear in modified form in 2 Peter.[71] We will later see clear reasons for thinking that Jude was not produced by Jesus' brother, but is a forgery in his name written at a relatively late time, by someone looking back on the apostolic age. 2 Peter is, as a consequence, later still. Moreover, the author clearly knows of 1 Peter, as seen not only in what appears to be an explicit reference ("This, now, my beloved, is the second letter I have written to you", 3:1) but also in numerous similarities, to be mentioned later. I will be arguing in the next chapter that 1 Peter is forged; that would necessarily make 2 Peter a forgery as well. Equally striking, and widely noted, is the fact that this author already knows of a collection of Paul's letters (not just one or two in isolation), and that he is living at a time when Christians were already considering these letters to be Scripture (3:15–16). It is hard to imagine any such situation before the end of the first century, at best.

Finally, nothing that we know about the historical Peter as a Jewish missionary to Jews who continued to uphold the Law is true of this letter (e.g., Galatians 2). There is, in fact, nothing Jewish about it. The reference to the false teachers who emerged from the community as those who had earlier escaped τὰ μιάσματα suggests they started out as pagans, not Jews (2:20). And the use of Scripture bears no relation to what we would suspect of a law-abiding believer like Peter. It is true that he speaks of the prophecy of Scripture (1:20); but even if he is referring to Jewish Scripture (as opposed to the writings of Christians that, like Paul's letters, are considered

Scripture), there is nothing to suggest that the Law continues to be in force. On the contrary Scripture is read in a completely presentist way. The examples cited of disobedience in Scripture are merely illustrative of how God works. And there is no injunction to follow the dictates of Scripture. Quite the contrary, it is standard, high morals, not the works of the Law, that matter to this author.

It became common in Petrine forgeries to relate firsthand experiences with Jesus, a ploy that makes considerable sense: why else claim to be Jesus' right-hand man, if you cannot appeal to the authority that experience provides? And so the author of 1 Peter states that he was a "witness to the sufferings of Christ" (5:1). So too, the author of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter claims to have observed the crucifixion of Jesus, somewhat oddly, while conversing with Christ on a hill nearby. And the author of the Greek Apocalypse of Peter, also on a hill, is taken by Jesus himself on a guided tour of the realms of the blessed and the damned.

The ironies in the case of 2 Peter in particular are nonetheless striking. This author insists that he was present at the transfiguration precisely in order to validate the status of his authority: his views, he avers, are not based on fictions (as opposed to the false teachers he opposes) but on facts and personal experiences (1:16–18). Yet this claim itself is a fiction written by a forger who has invented the tale of the personal experience, as recognized by J. Frey.[72] Moreover, this assertion of factual authority is used precisely in order to oppose the ψευδοπροφῆται and the ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι (2:1–3) who revile "the truth" and teach "false words"—all this in a ψευδεπίγραφον,, a writing that is "inscribed with a lie" written by someone who deceives his readers about his own authoritative credentials. Rarely in early Christian texts do we find irony so exquisite.

The Polemical Function of the Forgery

In the next chapter I will argue that both the explicit reference to the letters of Paul as Scripture and the numerous resonances with Pauline thought in 2 Peter are not incidental to the polemical purposes of the letter but are, in fact, a fundamental component of them. For the purposes of the present chapter, it is enough to note the severity of the polemic and its centrality to the letter. The letter is, in fact, entirely polemical, directed against "false teachers" from within the community who adopt eschatological views

counter to those received by the author from the early Christian apocalyptic tradition. The heart of the letter (virtually all of chapters 2 and 3) is directed to this polemic, and it is important to recognize that the charges of licentiousness that dominate chapter 2 are tied from the outset to the false teachings (2:1, "destructive heresies" that revile "the way of truth" and involve "false words"). In other words, the opponents are not simply unprincipled reprobates; they are false teachers whose errant views have, in the author's opinion, led to lascivious behavior. This connection between false teaching and immorality is reconfirmed in the author's antidote, which involves "holy and pious conduct" rooted in a correct understanding of eschatology (3:11–13). The idea that bad theology led to unconscionable behavior was to become standard fare among proto-orthodox heresiologists in the decades and centuries to follow.[73] And indeed, much of what the author says about his opponents involves stock polemic: they deny the Master; they secretly bring in heresies; they are licentious; they lead to the reviling of truth; they are greedy; they exploit with false words; they are sure to be destroyed; they despise authority; they are wild, dissipated, carousers.

With stereotypes such as these, we are handcuffed in trying to identify the opponents, if in fact there was some kind of actual, historical group lying behind the polemic. It may bear noting that the author's opposition to them resonates with later attacks on various Gnostic groups. His adversaries appeal to knowledge but are "without knowledge" (ἀγνοοῦσιν; 2:12); they urge freedom from bodily constraints (passim); they "revile the glorious ones" (comparable to Gnostic denigration of the world creators? 2:10); they base their views on myths rather than historical verities (1:16). But in the end, such charges cannot contribute significantly to any firm identification. Only two features of the opposition appear clear from the polemic leveled against them: the author insists that they are enemies who have emerged from within the Christian community, and they endorse false eschatological views.

As to the first point, 2:20 and 3:15–16 seem decisive. The opponents had formerly "escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," but then they "became entangled in them again and were worse off than before." Obviously the opponents did not see themselves in this light, and may well have been amazed at the charges of immorality and licentious behavior leveled against them. But it appears that

these enemies, at least as portrayed by the forger, have developed views at variance with the "original" teaching, and they have done so based on their interpretation of the letters of Paul, which they, as "ignorant and unstable" persons, "twist as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." In other words, these are Christian Scripture scholars who have interpreted Paul in a way that this author finds offensive and scandalous.

This misuse of Paul coincides with a general approach to authority by the false teachers, as portrayed by their enemy, the forger of the letter. That the issue is authority is clear already in 1:20, where the author insists that the prophecies "of Scripture" are not a matter of private, personal exposition (ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως). Prophecy came not from human θέλημα; it came from the Spirit of God. Presumably, then, human interpretations of prophecy—such as those practiced by the enemy—are strictly verboten. Here we seem to have an adumbration of modern hermeneutical debates, as this author simply wants the texts in question to "speak for themselves," since, after all, they are divinely inspired and can only be corrupted when humans apply their minds to them.

The teachings of prophetic scripture are consistent with the teachings of Jesus (3:2) and naturally of his apostles (3:2), especially "our brother Paul" (3:15). Since these are the writings explicitly invoked (though never quoted), is the author imagining that it was specifically the Christian prophets who were "moved by the holy spirit" and so "spoke from God" (1:21)? If so, the reference to "the rest of the Scriptures" (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφάς, 3:16) may be referring, as Lindemann has suggested, to Christian writings, rather than the "Old Testament."[74] Or, it may be, as in the standard interpretation, that the author is simply equating the two sets of writings in authority. In either event, the author positions two sets of indubitable authority against the fallacious reasonings of his opponents: (1) the clear meaning of authoritative texts when read without human sophistry, and (2) his own voice, as one who does not follow myths but knows the truth whereof he speaks since he, unlike they, was an actual companion of Jesus and beheld his glory on the holy mountain.

As pointed out, there are numerous connections between chapters 2 and 3, in which the "teaching" (the "destructive heresy") is tied to the "morality," attacked in notoriously vague but consistently nasty terms in chapter 2, terms that are largely drawn from the book of Jude. One would

be hard-pressed indeed to reconstruct the teaching of the opponents from the invective directed against them in the earlier polemic : “irrational animals … blaspheming in things about which they have no knowledge … who consider it pleasure to revel during the day…. blots and blemishes who revel in their dissipated lives…. eyes full of adultery, incessantly in sin” and so on (2:12–14). To learn what the opponents actually say the reader needs to wait for chapter 3. The content of the false teaching is not that Christians need to be licentious. It is that the apocalyptic end proclaimed by Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles is not to be expected. It is this anti-apocalyptic view that leads, in the author’s opinion, to the immoral lifestyle of the enemies, possibly on the logic that if the end is not coming soon, there is plenty of time to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh, an argument that the opponents, if they actually existed, may have found astonishing.

The specific teaching of these “mockers” (3:3) is posed in terms of their blasphemous question and the implication they draw from it: “Where is the promise of his parousia? For since the fathers fell asleep, everything remains just as it was at the beginning of creation.” The question has to do with the return of Jesus. There is no sign of it happening. The “fathers” must be the fathers of the church, the early Christian leaders who have all died, possibly in expectation that the end would occur within their own lifetimes. Rather than concede that these fathers were wrong, the opponents have interpreted their writings (“the letters of Paul… and the rest of the writings”) in such a way as to show they were not, in fact, in error, because they did not predict a literal parousia of Jesus. It is not the fathers who have erred; it is the Christian group represented by the author of this rebuttal, 2 Peter, the group who has held on to the belief that an apocalyptic crisis was still imminent and who insisted that this had been the teaching of Jesus and his apostles all along (3:2). For the opponents this was not the proclamation of Jesus or the teaching of his apostles, and certainly not the teaching found in the letters of Paul. The end is not coming right away and it is not coming in the way sometimes proclaimed. These nonapocalyptic opponents claimed that their view had been the view of Jesus, his apostles, and Paul.

Such Christians could certainly find support for their view in earlier Christian writings, as amply attested in the few that still survive. The apocalyptic message proclaimed by the Jesus of Mark, some forty years after the founding of the new faith, came to be muted in Luke; by the time of John it came practically to disappear. As we will see shortly, it is

polemicized against in the still later Gospel of Thomas. Not just Jesus but also Paul went through a radical de-apocalypticizing transformation at the hands of his later followers, as we have seen already, for example, in the letters of Colossians and, even more, Ephesians. This transformation continued in some Pauline circles of the second century, as among those Paulinists opposed in the Acts of Paul are those who declared that the resurrection is not a future, physical event: people are resurrected in their children, here, in this life.[75] We do not know if the opponents of 2 Timothy took this, or some similar line, but they too appear to have claimed Pauline support for their views that "the resurrection is past" (2 Tim. 2:18).

Pauline Christianity, much like Christianity at large, was enormously split on numerous issues, including this matter of eschatology. It was the nonapocalyptic view that eventually came to dominate within broader Christendom. It is no accident that the book of Revelation had such difficulty finding a place among the books of Scripture. Later chiliasts who believed in a literal millennium on earth, such as the early-second-century Papias, came to be mocked by writers such as Eusebius, who labeled his proto-orthodox forebear a man of "very little intelligence" (*H.E.* 3.39). The harsh words were directed against Papias not because he was, in fact, stupid, but because he was foolish enough to believe that there would be a utopian existence here on earth to be brought by an apocalyptic crisis at the end of the age. In other words, he was fool enough to agree with early Christian preaching.

So too did the author of 2 Peter. Was this one of the reasons this book too eventually had difficulty making it into the canon of Scripture? For this author, God created this world by his word and destroyed it with water (3:5–6). Next it will be destroyed by fire (3:7). The author adumbrates his view earlier in his short epistle, as when he refers to the (true) believers' "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1:11) and in his abundant stress on the coming of real and palpable judgment on the false teachers throughout chapter 2. But it is in his reasoned response of 3:8 :-15 that he sets forth views that contrast with the "destructive heresies" of his opponents. As proclaimed by Jesus and his apostles (3:2, 15–16) the end really is coming "soon." But temporal proximity is determined by a divine, not a human, calendar. And as Scripture teaches (Ps. 90:4), with the Lord a day is fully commensurate with a thousand years. There has been a (seeming) delay only because of God's

forbearance, giving everyone a chance to repent. But the "Day of the Lord" is coming, like a thief, and it will involve a total, all encapsulating cosmic destruction (3:10, 12). In expectation of this apocalyptic moment, the true believers need to live in godly and pious ways (3:11).

In taking this stand, the author placed himself securely in the tradition that he understood to have stemmed from the apocalyptic proclamation of Jesus and his apostles, among whom he numbered himself. In order to provide particularly strong authorization for his views, he claimed to have seen firsthand the glory of Jesus, a glory that foreshadowed one yet to be revealed, on the "Day of the Lord," when destruction would come to this world. His views, in other words, were not simply those that stood within a noble tradition. They derived from the foundation of the church. The church is rooted in Scriptural prophecies, which anticipate a coming destruction, in the teachings of Jesus himself, and in the writings of Paul. This author was allegedly a companion of Jesus and a fellow apostle of Paul. As opposed to the "mockers" who have proclaimed a nonapocalyptic view of the faith, he writes to assure his readers that a clear and definite end is coming, and that it will be brutal, especially for those who think otherwise. These are "lying prophets" (ψευδοπροφῆται) and lying teachers (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι).. And the author has no scruples at all about telling a lie of his own, by writing a ψευδεπίγραφον,, in order to attack the teachers of falsehood.[76]

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

As a final example of a forgery written, in part, to correct false eschatological notions, we can turn to the Gospel of Thomas. Unlike the other books we have considered, the Gospel of Thomas does not connect itself with the teachings of Paul; indeed, its eschatological views can be read as a rejection of Paul.

No one thinks the book was authentically produced by Didymus Judas Thomas. The name is known throughout Syriac traditions. "Judas Thomas" appears in the Syriac translation of John 14:22 (for "Judas not Iscariot"), in the Abgar legends that we will consider later, and especially in the fabricated Acts of Thomas. In that narrative of Thomas's missionary exploits there is no doubt concerning whose twin ("Didymus"/"Thomas") he is; the circumstance that he and his brother Jesus look just alike makes

possible some of the most entertaining moments of the plot. Outside of the prologue of the Gospel, the author makes no use of the name (except saying 13, where it is not a self-designation and is probably a reference to a different Thomas). But the prologue is enough. The words that "the living Jesus" spoke are written by Didymus Judas Thomas. What greater authorization do these sayings need? They come from the pen of Jesus' own twin. Who better to know the secrets that can provide life eternal (saying 1)?

There are numerous themes developed throughout the collection, but as frequently noted, it is no accident that anti-apocalyptic sayings occur near the very beginning (saying 3) and the very end (saying 113), bracketing the whole. Five sayings altogether are particularly germane, and all five point in the same direction. This author, writing falsely in the name of Jesus' brother, insists, on his brother's authority, that there is to be no apocalyptic crisis at the end of the age to usher in God's good kingdom. The kingdom of God is here already, both within those who understand the secret teachings of Jesus and spread throughout the earth, for those who can see. Whether or not this view stands in direct tension with the apocalyptic teachings of the real, historical Jesus, as the majority of scholars continue to hold, they certainly stand at odds with the apocalyptic proclamation of his early apostles, such as Paul. The Gospel of Thomas was written, in some measure, to promote a nonapocalyptic eschatology and to polemicize against Christians who maintained that there was a future, physical kingdom yet to come to earth. To that extent the eschatology of the collection appears to be much more in line with the views opposed by two of the forgeries we have already considered, 2 Timothy and 2 Peter, and closer to the views advocated by traditions now found in the falsely ascribed Gospel of John, where eternal life, for the most part, is portrayed as a present reality for those who believe in Jesus (thus 3:17–19, 36; 5:24; 11:25–27; etc.). In John, however, there continues to be some element of eschatological reserve in that it contains passages, possibly undigested fragments from earlier traditions, that still allow there will be a future apocalyptic event (5:25–29). Not so in the Gospel of Thomas. The kingdom is here and now; it is not a future, physical event to be anticipated.

Saying 3

The attack on an apocalyptic eschatology appears at the outset in saying 3. The saying presents a number of problems of text[77] and translation[78] that need not detain us here. T. F. Glasson has plausibly argued that it is to be understood as a midrash on Deut. 30:10–25 that establishes a connection between commandments, wisdom, and the reign of God within.[79] In any event, that the interpretation is advanced polemically is obvious: it is directed against "those who lead you," who maintain that the kingdom is a physical place that can be entered. This view is parodied: Is it in the sky? Is it in the sea? No, the kingdom is not a place that can be entered. "Rather, the kingdom of heaven is inside of you and outside" (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστι κἀκτός)..[80]

The tie to Luke 17:20–21 is obvious: "the kingdom of God is among you" (again: ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν). But the Thomasine saying differs significantly, at least from the way in which the logion appears in its broader Lukan context. There, Jesus is asked by the Pharisees—understood to be the enemy—when, not where, the kingdom is to come. Jesus replies that it will not come with observable signs, so that no one will be able to say "here it is or there." Instead, for Luke, the kingdom of God is in your midst. In this case ἐντός cannot mean "within" you, as it does in Thomas; Jesus is scarcely telling his opponents that they themselves have the kingdom "in their hearts." No, for Luke the kingdom of God is present among them because it is manifest already in the ministry of Jesus. Thus, elsewhere Luke indicates that the kingdom of God has "come near" (10:9, 11) and in Jesus' ministry it is said already to have "arrived" (11:20). Moreover—and this is the key difference from Thomas—in Luke there is still a firm expectation that there is a decisive event to occur at the end of the age (21:7–32; see esp. v. 31). The experiences of the kingdom as present in the life and ministry of Jesus are therefore proleptic of the denouement that can still be expected. This is evident in the immediate context of 17:20–21 as well, where Jesus goes on to discuss the coming of the son of man (17:22–37).

That is not the case, however, for the Gospel of Thomas. Here the kingdom is already fully present, inside all those who know themselves, recognizing that they are "the sons of the living father."[81] This polemic is not only directed against chiliasts of the author's own day (early second century), proto-orthodox authors such as Papias, who still expected a future,

physical, utopian kingdom to appear on earth. It is even more directed against the sacred texts that such proto-orthodox were beginning to cherish as authoritative, such as the Gospel of Mark (9:1; 13:30) and the letters of Paul (1 Thess. 4:14–17; 1 Corinthians 15, especially vv. 24–25, 51–57), which envisioned the kingdom as coming not only with the transformation of the creation (Rom. 8:18–25) but also with the resurrection of the body, which would be raised immortal. Thomas demurs. The kingdom will not be experienced as a place to be entered by a future, physically transformed body; it is to be experienced now, as an internal reality, enjoyed by those who know who they really are.

Saying 18

The polemic continues along a similar line in saying 18. Now, however, rather than being the unnamed "Christian leaders" who misunderstand Jesus' eschatological teaching, it is the earthly disciples, who, foolishly, for this Gospel, ask about "how our end will be." The saying clearly calls to mind the Synoptic tradition, where the disciples ask Jesus about the "end of the age" (Mark 13:3–4; Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:7), and where Jesus responds by delivering his apocalyptic discourse. One key difference is that in saying 18 the disciples ask their question in terms not of apocalyptic but of personal eschatology. They are interested in knowing their own fate, presumably after death. Such concerns are more in line with those of proto-orthodox texts like the Greek Apocalypse of Peter, also modeled on the Synoptic little apocalypse, but transformed from a description of the "end of the age" to an account of "life after death"—the fate of souls in the realms of the blessed and damned.

It is striking that in the Gospel of Thomas Jesus' response redirects the question, away from the issue of personal destiny and the temporality that it implies (the postmortem experience of the believer). To know the "end" one has to know the "beginning." The end, in fact, is not a new beginning, as the disciples mistakenly think. It is a return to the original beginning, which encapsulates the end. Those who recognize the beginning are already at the end; they have achieved the goal. That is to say, the end is not a cataclysmic break in history, as in apocalyptic eschatology, or the future fate of the soul, as in proto-orthodox transformations of that idea. It is instead a return to the beginning.

It is important to note that "the beginning" for this author is present. It "is." The one who understands this beginning—who knows the primordial condition—is still in the present, and yet experiences the return to Eden. Such a one "will not taste death." Since this final clause recalls saying 1, it should be clear that those who understand the secret sayings of Jesus are those who understand that the beginning is the end and so have achieved the Edenic existence of the kingdom. As saying 49 later expresses the matter: "You will find the kingdom; for you are from it and to it you will return."[82] DeConick has provided a clear exposition of saying 18: "It is implied by this dialogue that the community previously has misunderstood the End to refer to the eschatological renewal of creation through cosmic endings, rather than the mystical renewal of creation and the original Adam through encratic practice and personal transformation."[83]

It is true that even later proto-orthodox thinkers could stress the return to the beginning at the end, as seen, for example, in the comments of Origen:

> Seeing, then, that such is the end, when "all enemies shall have been subjected to Christ," when "the last enemy shall be destroyed, that is death," and when "the kingdom shall be delivered up to God and the Father by Christ to whom all things have been subjected," let us, I say, from such an end as this, contemplate the beginning of things. For the end is always like the beginning; as therefore there is one end of all things, so we must understand that there is one beginning of all things, and as there is one end of many things, so from one beginning arise many differences and varieties, which in their turn are restored … to one end, which is like the beginning." (*On First Principles*, 1.6.2)[84]

But even here "the end" is an apocalyptic event, not a present reality. The polemic of the saying in Thomas is especially stark in comparison with the apocalyptic sayings of Jesus found in the Synoptic tradition. In Mark 9:1, in particular, the disciples "will not taste death" until they see that the apocalyptic events of cosmic upheaval transform their world. How different that is from the disciples of Thomas, who "will not taste death"—period. For the kingdom is not a future physical event to come to earth. It is within

those who come to understand the secret teachings of Jesus and, thereby, come to know themselves.

Saying 37

Jesus' anti-apocalyptic eschatology, and the disciples' failure to appreciate it, are continued in saying 37. Once again the disciples ask a future-oriented question, in this instance involving not their own fate so much as the return of Jesus: "When will you appear to us and when shall we see you?" And once again Jesus corrects the question by his response: the full revelation of divine truth does not come from something that Jesus will do, such as return in glory. It comes from something his disciples do: escape the material trappings of this world ("when you strip naked without being ashamed and take off your clothes … and stamp on them"). For this Gospel, Jesus is not one who "will be" seen; he is already here, in this world, for those who already see: "Split a piece of wood: I am there. Lift up the stone and you will find me there" (saying 77). The disciples will "see" Jesus ("the son of the Living One")[85] when they escape the material trappings of this world.

Valantasis argues that the "clothes" of this passage represent social encumbrances,[86] but they are better understood as the materiality of the body, as more widely interpreted. And even though the metaphor of "stripping" may call to mind baptismal language, as stressed by J. Z. Smith, others such as April De-Conick and Jarl Fossum have noted that a range of Jewish and Christian texts use the image to refer to the removal of the body ("stripped").[87] Trampling on the body, then, refers to physical renunciation, for example in the kinds of ascetic lifestyle otherwise endorsed by the Gospel. Moreover, behaving like "little children" by stripping without shame may recall saying 18 and the need to return to "the beginning," that is, to human existence before the Fall. Returning to a prelapsarian state means enjoying the life of Eden; it is worth noting that Adam and Eve are described in Gen. 2:25 as naked and not ashamed. Only after eating the fruit do they cover themselves (3:7, because they were "afraid"). In other Christian texts, such as the *Liber Graduum* (341:2–5), Adam and Eve are described, prior to eating the fruit, as naked nursing babies who are not ashamed.[88]

In short, for saying 37, the disciples err in eagerly awaiting the physical return of Jesus. What matters is not an imminent parousia but a new way of life. Jesus' followers must escape their bodily constraints and the material trappings of this world in order to "see" Jesus as he really is, and thus return to an Edenic existence. The material world will not be destroyed by a decisive act of God in a future cataclysmic event; the world is to be escaped through renunciation of the body.

Saying 51

The disciples continue to demonstrate their lack of understanding in the opening question of saying 51: "When will the repose of the dead take place? And when will the new world come?" As Valantasis has pointed out, the question not only works against the tenor of the entire document—presupposing precisely the apocalyptic view that the author is at pains to polemicize against—it also fails to grasp the teaching of the immediately preceding saying 50, where "repose" is not for the dead but for the living. Once again Jesus corrects their misunderstanding: the "new world" is not a future event; it is already present for those who understand the teachings of Jesus and have achieved self-knowledge. The Kingdom is within those who know themselves.

Here, as in the preceding sayings, it is clear that we are witnessing developments within the Thomasine community as it shifts from an apocalyptic view inherited from other, earlier Christian traditions, and begins, then, to polemicize against them, stressing that the Kingdom is available in the here and now. De-Conick has plausibly argued that the shift in the community's thinking occurred in stages, evident in the probable (though hypothetical) transmission history of this particular saying. Originally, in her view, the disciples asked "when will the resurrection [ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ] of the dead occur?" This, then, was an apocalyptic view, that came to be displaced. But in a second stage the community's eschatology became personal, rather than apocalyptic, and as a result the question itself was changed: "When will the repose [ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΙΣ—different in only three letters] of the dead occur?" Jesus' reply makes even better sense now: repose is present among those who know themselves (unlike the uncomprehending disciples) and so have recreated Eden in a prelapsarian state.[89]

It is worth recalling in this connection that there are clear indications elsewhere that the question of when the resurrection will occur was hotly debated. Colossians and Ephesians both suggest that the resurrection of believers has, in some spiritual sense, already happened, a view evidenced as well, earlier, by Paul's opponents in Corinth. This is a view directly opposed by 2 Timothy (2:18). But it is adopted in modified form in the teachings of Paul's false followers, Demas and Hermogenes, in the Acts of Paul ("the resurrection which [Paul] says is to come … has already taken place in the children, and that we rise again, after having come to the knowledge of the true God," ch. 14), and in yet another form in the Gospel of Philip: "People who say they will first die and then arise are wrong. If they do not receive the resurrection first, while they are alive, they will receive nothing when they die" (Gospel of Philip 73).[90] This final perspective compares favorably with the view staked out in the Gospel of Thomas. The "repose" and the "new world" are not to be expected in the future: they have already come, "but for your part, you do not know it."

Saying 113

The disciples' eschatological misunderstanding comes to final expression in the climactic question of saying 113: "When will the kingdom come?" As already mentioned, the saying provides a closing bracket for the opening of saying 3, so that the Gospel begins and ends with the question of the kingdom, emphasizing in both places that it will not arrive in some undisclosed time in the future: "It will not come by waiting for it." Nor will it be a physical entity here on earth: "They will not say, 'Look, here it is,' or 'Look, it is there.'" Instead the kingdom is here and now, even though it is hidden from those who lack knowledge. For this Gospel, "knowledge" involves both an understanding of these secret teachings of Jesus and the self-knowledge that this understanding brings. And so, "the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and people do not see it."

The polemic against the apocalyptic view here is extended through the use of familiar apocalyptic images. And so, for example, in the apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13:21–23 and Matt. 24:23–26 there are also false teachers who proclaim "Look, here is the Christ!" or "Look, there he is!" In this earlier conception the true followers are not to believe these false proclamations, for the end will not come with the physical appearance of

Jesus as a human here on earth. It will come with cataclysmic signs in the heavens, when the sun grows dark, the moon fails to give its light, and the stars fall from the sky. That is when the "Son of Man" will come on the clouds of heaven and send out his angels to collect his chosen ones.

For the Gospel of Thomas nothing could be farther from the truth. Here, false teachers are not false simply because they wrongly think Jesus will physically return to earth before the catastrophic end; they are false because they think there will be a catastrophic end. They are not wrong in advancing a faulty apocalyptic scenario; they are wrong in advancing any kind of apocalyptic scenario. The kingdom is not coming as a future event. For this Gospel it is experienced here and now among those who interpret and implement Jesus' sayings correctly and so know who they really are. The kingdom is already spread out on the earth. It is not coming at a future time to a specific place. It is available to all who "find the meaning of these words." The kingdom of God is not imminent; it is immanent.

1. See, e.g., Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, JSNTSup (Sheffield : University of Sheffield Press, 1989).

2. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

3. Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1807.

4. Jens Herzer, "Fiction oder Tauschung? Zur Diskussion über die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 489–536. For another recent brief history of scholarship, see Luke Timothy Johnson, "First Timothy 1, 1–20: The Shape of the Struggle," in *1 Timothy Reconsidered*, ed. Karl Paul Donfried (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), pp. 19–39.

5. 3.1 (Leipzig: Weidmannischen Buchhandlung, 1812).

6. *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1835).

7. Leipzig: Englemann, 1880.

8. Jeremy Duff, "P46 and the Pastorals: A Misleading Consensus," *NTS* 44 (1998) : 578–90, answered in Eldon J. Epp, "Issues in the Interrelation of New Testament Textual Criticism and Canon," in *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible;* eds. Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), pp. 485–515; reprinted in

E. Epp, *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays 1962–2004* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 596–639, here 613–19.

9. As intimated, for instance, by Luke Timothy Johnson, "First Timothy 1, 1–20," p. 19.

0. Ihre Einheitlichkeit und Geschlossenheit dokumentiert sich weiter im einzelnen bis in eine enge Verwandtschaft der Sprache (Stil, Wortschatz), des Inhalts und vorausgesetzt kirchengeschichtliche Situation hinein. Sie sprechen dasselbe gehobene Griechisch, leben in derselben theologischen Begriffswelt, bekämpfen dieselben Häresien, kennen im ganzen dieselbe Organisation und Verfaßtheit der Einzelkirchen." *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 4th ed. (Regensberg: Pustet, 1969), p. 12.

1. "Die Past sind nicht bloß als pseudepigraphe Paulus*brife* geschaffen, sondern als pseudepigraphes *Corpus pastorale* konzipiert." Peter Trummer, "Corpus Paulinum—Corpus Pastorale: Zur Ortung der Paulustradition in den Pastoralbriefen," in *Paulus in den neutestamentlichen Spätschriften: zur Paulusrezeption im Neuen Testament*, ed. Karl Kertelge (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), p. 123.

2. Gerd Häfner, "Das Corpus Pastorale als literarisches Konstrukt," T?iQ 187 (2007): 259: "If the letters are best read as a corpus, [that is to say] as a literary construct, this fact would speak against their composition by Paul." ("Sind die Briefe am besten als Corpus zu lesen, als literarisches Konstrukt, spräche dies gegen ihre Abfassung durch Paulus.")

3. Prior, *Paul the Letter Writer;* Murphy-O-Connor, "Paul the Letter Writer"; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy;* William A. Richards, *Difference and Distance in Post-Pauline Christianity: An Epistolary Analysis of the Pastorals* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); Rüdiger Fuchs, *Unerwartete Unterschiede: Müssen wir unsere Ansichten über "die" Pastoralbriefe revidieren?* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2003); James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008); Jens Herzer, "Fiktion oder Täuschung?"

4. Schleiermacher maintained that 1 Timothy was the odd one out, and that view has been maintained on rare occasion over the years. See the most recent discussion of Jens Herzer, "Rearranging the 'House' of God: A New Perspective on the Pastoral Epistles," in *Empsychoi Logoi—Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst*, ed. Alberdina Houtman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 547–66. The

striking similarities of 1 Timothy and Titus make this view implausible to most others.

5. In 1 Timothy it refers to the parousia, in 2 Timothy to the incarnation (or the resurrection?).
6. See further note 17.
7. That is to say, if one were to posit that a Pauline imitator wrote 2 Timothy and an imitator of both Paul and 2 Timothy wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, then the hypothesis would require that the latter imitator chose as the specific linguistic features to replicate largely those not found otherwise in Paul. Moreover, this hypothesis requires three authors and three stages, whereas all of the data are more simply explained on the basis of two authors working at two stages: Paul and an imitator. As is true with the Synoptic Problem, the best solution should not unnecessarily multiply authors and stages for data that can be explained more economically.
8. So, for example, Jens Herzer, "Rearranging the 'House' of God."
9. Herzer, "Rearranging."
0. *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, pp. 63–65.
1. *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*. NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), p. 6.
2. *Making of Paul*, p. 84. Pervo goes on to show that if one assumes that the three make up a corpus, they can be read as a kind of epistolary novel.
3. L. T. Johnson, "1 Tim. 1:1-20," p.22.
4. *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, p. 61.
5. P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921).
6. Wilhelm Michaelis, "Pastoralbriefe und Wortstatistik," *ZNW 28* (1929) : 69–76.
7. See, for example, Wolfgang Schenk, "Die Briefe an Timotheus I und II und an Titus (Pastoral-briefe) in der neueren Forschung (1945–1985)," *ANRW II*. 25, 4 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), pp. 3404–38.
8. Armin D. Baum, "Semantic Variation within the *Corpus Paulinum:* Linguistic Considerations Concerning the Richer Vocabulary of the Pastoral Epistles," *TynBul* 59 (2008): 271–92.
9. Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus* AB (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1990), p. 5.

0. *1 and 2 Timothy*, p. 75: "one of the weakest arguments against authenticity."
1. On the question of whether the verisimilitudes suggest authenticity, see the trenchant article of Brox, mentioned on p. 122.
2. I do not need to deal at any great length with scholars who continue to find the issue of forgery in the New Testament to be theologically or personally troubling, given all that I have shown so far. A commentator such as I. Howard Marshall admits that the evidence is too strong against Pauline authorship, but he wants to insist that the Pauline follower who produced the letters did so "honestly"—not like the heretics who forged writings to promote their own "false" teachings (see p. 32, n. 9). This again is theology, not history. Such views lead then to his proposal, advanced with all seriousness, that in cases such as the Pastorals we speak not of pseudonymous but of allonymous writings, not of pseudepigraphy (let alone forgery) but allopigraphy.
3. David Cook, "The Pastoral Fragments Reconsidered," *JTS* 35 (1984): 120–31. The even more highly nuanced, hypothetical, and, one might say, overly fragmented theory of James D. Miller, *The Pastoral Epistles as Composite Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) has also failed to persuade, for similar reasons.
4. As Lewis Donelson points out, this is simply not a problem for anyone who has read extensively in the forgeries of antiquity. He refers in particular, as an example, to the famous twelfth letter of "Plato," forged in order to validate yet other works of Plato that the author himself knows are forged (he may have forged them himself), including random irrelevancies to mask his motives by what appear to be off-the-cuff remarks. *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, pp. 23–42.
5. Fingierte Personalnotizen sind als Stilmittel antiker Pseudepigraphie bekannt und stellen auch in den Pastoralbriefen nichts Erstaunliches dar; "Zu den persönlichen Notizen der Pastoralbriefe," *BZ* 13 (1969): 76–94, here 79–79; reprinted in Brox, ed., *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdischchristlichen Antike*, pp. 275–76. Brox goes on to show that the verisimilitudes are not merely guises for authenticity, but they serve the rhetorical purposes—especially paranetic—of the letters as well.
6. "1 Timothy 1, 1–20," pp. 24–25.
7. Prior, *Paul the Letter Writer*, p. 39.

8. Ibid., p. 45.
9. Prior does explore the use of the first person singular and plural in Paul's letters, but when one examines the data he provides, it is to no effect. That Paul himself wrote these so-called co-authored letters by himself is suggested by Galatians 1:1, "all the brothers who are with me." Are we seriously to imagine that everyone pitched in?
0. Luke Timothy Johnson, "II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Reexamination," *JRelS 6* (1978): 1–26.
1. *Pseudepigraphy*, p. 117.
2. Ceslas Spicq, *Saint. Paul: les épitres pastorales* (Paris: Gabalda, 1969), pp. 52–72.
3. Robert J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–63; Günter Haufe, "Gnostische Irrlehre und ihre Abwehr in den Pastoralbriefen," in *Gnosis und Neues Testament: Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, ed. Karl-Wolfgang Tröger (Güterslow: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), pp. 325–39; Josef Zmijewski, "Die Pastoralbriefe als pseudepigraphische Schriften—Beschreibung, Erklärung, Bewertung," *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (1979): 97–118; I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles;* Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*.
4. "2 Timothy Contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus," *RB* 98 (1991): 414.
5. Jerry L. Sumney, *"Servants of Satan," "False Brothers" and Other Opponents of Paul*, JSNTSup. 188 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).
6. Robert J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–63.
7. See p. 176.
8. See further pp. 176–77 and 185–86.
9. "One might therefore even consider whether the author here perhaps polemicizes directly against Col (as well as Eph)." ("Man könnte deshalb sogar erwägen, ob der Vf hier möglicherweise direkt gegen Kol (und auch Eph) polemisiert.") *Aufhebung*, p. 139.
0. *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2.42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). His more recent discussion, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection* (Downer's Grove, IL:

Intervarsity, 2004), adds little to the discussion; nor does the work of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995).

1. Richards (*Secretary*, p. 46) cites Cicero, *Fam*. 16.10.2 and *Att*. 5.20, but he may be overreading the texts.
2. *Att*. 7.17, cited in Richards, *Secretary*, p. 96, note (in quo accusavi mecum ipse Pompeium).
3. Ibid., p. 52, n. 155. It should be noted that Richards uses this quotation in order to support his thesis that Brutus actually had a secretary compose his correspondence for him, but the text is explicitly addressing the issue of "epistolary style," not substance.
4. The term *peasant* has become a site of debate and even confusion in New Testament scholarship; I am using it in its most basic sense to refer to an uneducated person of low social status.
5. See Richards, *Secretary*, p. 213, depending on Wikenhauser's *Einleitung*.
6. Richards, *Secretary*, p. 48.
7. "Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century," *CBQ* 28 (1966):470.
8. Richards, *Secretary*, p. 48.
9. *Att* 11.2,.4; 11.5. Cited by Richards, *Secretary*, p. 50, nn. 147, 148.
0. Cicero, *Fam*, 8.1.1; cited in Richards, *Secretary*, p. 51.
1. As Richards later admits, *Secretary*, p. 111.
2. Ibid., pp. 110–11, emphasis his.
3. *Vir. ill*. 1. Richard Bauckham is not right when he claims that Jerome argued that the differences between the two letters were due to the use of two different secretaries *(Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC 50, Waco: Word Books, 1983, p. 145). The passage in question is *Ad Hebidiam*, Epistula 120, 11 (c. 406/7): "Further, the two epistles, which circulate as Peter's, are also different in style among themselves and in character, and in word structure; from which we understand that he used different interpreters (or "translators": interpretibus—not secretaries) as necessary."
4. "Non est igitur ignorandum praesentem epistolam esse falsatam, quae licet publicetur, non tamen in canone est." *Enarr. In Epist*. Cathol. *PG* 39, 1774.
5. Thus, for example, Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

6. Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), p. 137.
7. Ibid., p. 136.
8. See note 54.
9. "Peter, Second Epistle of," ABD, 5. 284.
0. Ibid., p. 283.
1. Ibid., p. 284.
2. "This makes for a particularly daring argument if one keeps in mind that the author himself fictionally constructs the claim to eye-witness status" ("Darinliegt freilich ein besonders kühnes Argument, wenn man bedenkt, dass der Autor selbst den Anspruch der Augenzeugenschaft fiktional konstruiert"). Jörg Frey, "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 707.
3. See, for example, Frederik Wisse, "The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 133–43.
4. *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979), pp. 93–94.
5. Demas and Hermogenes teach that "the resurrection which [Paul] says is to come … has already taken place in the children, and that we rise again, after having come to the knowledge of the true God." *Acts of Paul* 14; translation ofJ. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
6. Bauckham claims that since "Testaments" were by their nature fictional in character, it is "very implausible to suppose that most Jewish readers were so naïve as to read such speeches as accurate historical reports or that their authors were so naïve as to expect them to be so read." This, again, is history by assertion. What, exactly, makes either naïvety implausible? He goes on to claim that 2 Peter, itself a Testament, was meant as an "entirely transparent fiction" (2 *Peter and Jude*, p. 134), offering in support the point that the false teachers are spoken of in the present tense, rather than the conventional future tense—a sign to the readers of the book's fictional status. In response, it is hard to see how he can have it both ways (Testaments were read as fictions; this book differs from Testaments in a

way to make readers take it as a fiction), making him appear to be grasping at straws. Moreover, if the author did not mean for his readers to take his identity seriously, it is difficult indeed to see why he roots his authority in a personal experience of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, a real experience in contrast to the fantasies of the false teachers. Far more convincing is the counterposition of J. Frey, "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild."

7. We are fortunate to have a Greek fragment, POxyr 654, that is to be given primacy. There is, unfortunately, an important lacuna at 1.15, normally filled with 0eou, for "kingdom of God," but which DeConick argues should be filled with oupavou, for "kingdom of heaven." If she is wrong, then the saying is even more closely tied to Luke 17:21. But she makes a good case: the lacuna has room for fourteen to seventeen letters; the standard reconstruction provides only twelve, whereas hers provides fifteen. April DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 51.

8. The Coptic reads "those who draw you" (NETSOK). DeConick argues for a semitic original from NGD, meaning either to draw or to lead; the Greek, then, mistranslated the text, leading to the Coptic. *Original Gospel*, p. 52.

9. "The Gospel of Thomas, Saying, 3, and Deuteronomy XXX.11–14," *ExpTim* 78 (1976–77): 151–52.

0. Translations taken from Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 303–35. Here, however, I have accepted DeConick's reconstruction of the text; see note 77 above.

1. Uwe-Karsten Plisch is wrong to say that lines 1–3 and 4–5 are unrelated. Knowing oneself means to recognize the fact that the kingdom is within; failing to know oneself is to lack the kingdom. *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary*, tr. Gesine Schenke Robinson (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 43–44.

2. It may be worth noting that although the polemic is directed in part against an apocalyptic notion—even if modified in the direction of personal eschatology—the notion that Endzeit gleicht Urzeit—is central to Jewish apocalyptic thought, as recognized as early as Hermann Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen. 1 und Ap. Joh. 12;* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1895).

3. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 102.

4. Trans. G. W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973).

5. Richard Valantasis makes the interesting argument that by stripping off their clothes and trampling on them the disciples will see (i.e., come to know) not Jesus, but others of Jesus' followers. His reasoning is that since Jesus is described as "the living one" ("the living Jesus" of the prologue) then he could not also be the "son of the living one." His son must, then, be one like him: his followers. *The Gospel of Thomas* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 113. It is probably better, though, to see the Son of the Living One as "the Son of God," since, after all, the Father too is described as a "living one," as in Saying 3 ("sons of the living father").

6. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 113.

7. Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Garments of Shame," *HR* 5 (1966): 217–38; April DeConick and Jarl Fossum, "Stripped Before God: A New Interpretation of Logion 37 in the Gospel of Thomas," *VC* 45 (1991): 123–50.

8. See DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, 116.

9. Ibid., p. 183. Plisch argues that the text as we have it originally read ANASTASIS—resurrection—but was accidentally altered through scribal error. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 132.

0. Translation of Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

CHAPTER NINE

Forgeries in Support of Paul and His Authority

Most of the literary forgeries we have considered to this stage have involved the teachings of Paul. There were, of course, other Christian teachers, already in the first century, who claimed to represent the "true" understanding of the emerging Christian tradition more adequately than Paul. It may not be surprising, then, to find that a number of literary forgeries arose in the period, alternatively championing or challenging Paul's authority. In this chapter we will consider forgeries produced in support of the "Apostle to the Gentiles"; in the chapter that follows we will look at forgeries that call his authority, and his message, into question.

Two of the forgeries that we will be considering in this chapter are controversial among investigators today, one because many scholars question whether it has anything to do with Paul, his message, and his authority (1 Peter), the other because, in the judgment of most scholars, it makes no obvious authorial claim and so cannot be thought of as forged (the Acts of the Apostles). I will advance reasons for thinking that both scholarly opinions are wrong: these books are very much concerned with salvaging the image and authority of Paul, and both are best understood as forgeries.

FIRST PETER

Scholarship on 1 Peter has advanced dramatically since 1976, when J. H. Elliott declared it the "exegetical step-child" of the New Testament.[1] By 2004 Eugene Boring could note that during the preceding quarter-century more than sixty commentaries on the epistle had appeared in English and the major languages of Europe.[2] One of the hotly debated issues in the period involved the question of authorship, an issue that goes far back in the history of its modern investigation. Already in 1788 Semler, who did not deny the letter to Peter, indicated that the letter closely paralleled the teachings of Paul and could be seen as a Pauline "imitation."[3] It was

another twenty years before the Petrine authorship of the book was first challenged by H. H. Cludius, who maintained that the attribution of the letter to Peter was the result of a textual corruption in 1:1, where an original ὁ πρεσβύτερος was altered to read Πέτρος ἀπόστολος.[4] As we will see, since Cludius's day others too have proposed different textual changes of 1:1 to explain that the attribution is mistaken.

Arguments for 1 Peter as a Forgery

It is widely held today that the book was not written by Simon Peter. Boring claims that this is the general opinion among critical scholars, outside the ranks of those who disallow forgery in the New Testament on general principle.[5] A number of arguments are typically advanced for pseudepigraphy, some of them stronger than others. Among the more subsidiary are the following. First, there is almost nothing to suggest that Christianity had spread in Peter's day throughout the provinces of Asia Minor named in 1:1, making it highly unlikely that he, the historical Peter, would have written to churches there; moreover other traditions notably do not associate Peter with Christians in the general region. Next, if Peter himself had written the letter, it is very hard indeed to explain that in his references to "Christ" he gives no indication that he was his companion throughout his ministry; in fact, he gives no indication whatsoever that he had any personal knowledge of Jesus or his teachings (not even in 5:1, as we will see). Moreover, rather than identifying himself as a companion of Jesus, the author indicates that he is a "presbyter" (5:1), an office otherwise not associated with Peter, who appears rather to have been a missionary-apostle. Relatedly, the book shows that at the time of its composition "presbyters" were running the church as episkopoi (5:1–5; ἐπισκοποῦντες,, v. 2). There is no evidence of this kind of structured leadership of the churches during the lifetime of Peter, although obviously it became the model of Pauline churches by the time of the Pastorals, some decades after Peter's death. Furthermore, the author uses the term *Christian* (4:16) as if it were in established usage, even though it is otherwise not attested, for example in the writings of Paul, until closer to the end of the first century, in the book of Acts.

This final point relates to a much stronger argument against Petrine authorship. By the time this letter was written, it had become commonplace

for followers of Jesus to suffer persecution "as a Christian," simply "for the name" (4:12–17). There is nothing to suggest that the mere name "Christian" was ground for persecution in apostolic times. Even in the later accounts of the book of Acts, there is no instance in which followers of Jesus suffered persecution "for the name." On the contrary, Christians are punished for what is recognized, correctly or incorrectly, as wrongdoing. The same can be said about the earliest instance we have of imperial opposition to the Christians under Nero, the persecution that, traditionally, is thought to have led to Peter's own martyrdom. As Tacitus makes abundantly clear, Nero rounded up the Christians of Rome and subjected them to brutal treatment and execution not because they were Christians per se, but because of arson (a false charge, according to Tacitus; *Annals* 15.44). It is not until we get to the famous correspondence of Pliny with Trajan around 112 CE that we find any instance of Christians persecuted simply for bearing the name Christian (Book 10). By Pliny's time it was known that calling oneself "Christian" meant something. Specifically it meant refusing to reverence and sacrifice to the gods of the state. That is why Pliny employed a simple device to decide whether persons who denied being Christian were telling the truth: all they had to do was repeat prayers he provided and offer incense to the image of the emperor. Those who refused to do so hung on to the name Christian; those who complied forsook the name. This does not mean that we can facilely locate 1 Peter to the time of Pliny. It simply means that the recognition that the name Christian was ground for persecution cannot be located anywhere near the lifetime of Peter himself. When the recognition arose afterward is uncertain, but it probably happened sometime between Nero and Trajan, and the book is accordingly best located to that period.

Supporting evidence comes in the argument advanced most convincingly by C. Hunzinger, that the veiled reference to Rome in the epithet "Babylon," named as the place from which the author writes (5:13), makes sense only after 70 CE, years after Peter's death.[6] That "Babylon" must refer to Rome is shown by the facts that (1) elsewhere in both Jewish and Christian texts (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) "Babylon" is a codeword for Rome, and (2) Peter is never associated in any of our traditions with either Mesopotamia or Egypt (where there was another Babylon), whereas he is frequently connected with Rome, indeed as its first bishop.

Other nicknames for Rome exist, however (Kittim, Edom). Why has the author chosen "Babylon"? As Hunzinger notes, the reasons for the identification become clear in light of Jewish apocalyptic texts. Passages such as 4 Ezra 3.1–2, 28, 31, and Syr. Baruch 11.1 probably show that Rome was thought of as (the new) Babylon because it too destroyed Jerusalem and, especially, the Temple. In other words, it is the catastrophe of 70 CE, in comparison with 586 BCE, that makes the identification both obvious and palpable. So too we find in the Sybilline oracles that Nero flees "from Babylon" (5.143), and later in the same oracle we find Babylon directly connected to the land of Italy, again because of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.[7] And so Hunzinger's conclusion: "The unanimity of the Jewish supporting data forces the conclusion that *the designation of Rome as Babylon came about under the impression of the renewed destruction of the Jerusalem temple*."[8] 1 Peter, therefore, could not have been written prior to 70 CE and, as a result, could not have been written by Peter, who apparently died years earlier.[9]

There is an even more compelling reason for thinking that Peter did not write this letter. In all likelihood, Peter could not write.

Peter as Illiterate

In his now-classic study of ancient literacy, William Harris gave compelling reasons for thinking that at the best of times in antiquity only 10 percent or so of the population was able to read.[10] By far the highest portion of readers was located in urban settings. Widespread literacy like that enjoyed throughout modern societies requires certain cultural and historical forces to enact policies of near universal, or at least extensive, education of the masses. Prior to the industrial revolution, such a thing was neither imagined nor desired. As Meir Bar Ilan notes: "Literacy does not emerge in a vacuum but rather from social and historical circumstances."[11]

Moreover, far fewer people in antiquity could compose a writing than could read, as shown by the investigations of Raffaella Cribiore, who stresses that reading and composition were taught as two distinct skills and at different points of the ancient curriculum. Learning even the basics of reading was a slow and arduous process, typically taking some three years and involving repeating "endless drills" over "long hours": "In sum, a

student became accustomed to an incessant gymnastics of the mind."[12] These kinds of "gymnastics" obviously required extensive leisure and money, neither of which could be afforded by any but the wealthy classes. Most students did not progress beyond learning the basics of reading, to the second level of grammar. Training in composition came only after these early stages, and most students did not get to that point:[13] "the ability to articulate one's thoughts in writing was achieved only when much literature had been digested."[14] Especially difficult, and requiring additional training, was acquiring literacy in a second language. Indeed, as, Cribiore points out, "bilingualism did not correspond to biliteracy."[15]

All of these points bear closely on the question of whether an Aramaic-speaking fisherman from rural Galilee could produce a refined Greek composition such as 1 Peter. But before pressing that question, we should consider the issue of literacy specifically in Roman Palestine, a matter pursued most convincingly in studies by Bar-Ilan and Catherine Hezser.[16]

Bar-Ilan begins his analysis by referring to cross-cultural studies that have demonstrated that literacy rates are closely tied to broader social and cultural factors. Urban societies are always more literate than rural. Moreover, low birth rates, low population growth, and low life expectancy all relate to low literacy rates, and for good reason. With respect to life expectancy, for example: the use of the written word positively affects a society's hygiene, infant care, agricultural practices, and so on, all of which play a vital role in longevity. And so, for example, the more illiterate societies always suffer the highest rates of infant mortality.

Turning to hard historical evidence for ancient Israel, Bar-Ilan notes that the Talmud allows for towns where only one person could read in the synagogue (*Soferim* 11:2). Since all synagogues that have been discovered can accommodate more than fifty people, we are probably looking at literacy rates, in these places, at about 1 percent. When this figure is tied to the fact that the land of Israel was 70 percent rural, and only 10 percent was "highly" urban, one can take into account all the sundry factors and crunch the numbers: "it is no exaggeration to say that the total literacy rate in the Land of Israel … was probably less than 3%." Most of this 3 percent would have been wealthy Jews living in the major cities.

Hezser has devoted the only full-length study to this question in her monograph *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*.[17] She agrees with Bar-Ilan

on his statistical claims: total literacy in Palestine was probably around 3 percent; those who were literate were largely located in urban areas; some villages and towns had a literacy rate of lower than 1 percent. In this connection Hezser makes the striking historical observation that "the only literary works which can with certainty be attributed to Palestinian Jews of the first century C.E. are the writings of Josephus and the no longer extant works of his opponent Justus of Tiberias" (both of whom "received a Greek education and were influenced by Graeco-Roman writing").[18] Moreover, Hezser argues that "writing seems to have mostly—and perhaps almost exclusively—been used by the political, economic, and religious-intellectual elites in late Roman Palestine." Was the fisherman Simon-Peter in this august group?

Before pursuing that question, we should look at the related issue of the use of Greek in first-century Palestine. Hezser evaluates the extent to which Palestinian Jews may have been able to converse in Greek more generously than other more recent studies devoted to the question, as we will see in a moment. But even she points out that Josephus is the only Jew of Roman Palestine to indicate that he learned Greek, and she notes that Josephus himself indicates that he could not write literary Greek without assistance from Greek speakers (*Contra Apionem* 1.9). Moreover, Hezser admits that we do not know whether Josephus studied Greek before coming to Rome.[19] She later acknowledges that most Jews in Palestine would have had only "a rudimentary knowledge of Greek," which involved knowing "a few phrases to lead to a simple conversation."[20] That is a long way from being able to write a high-level Greek composition, especially in light of the fact that simple conversational Greek took no special training, whereas learning to read (even in one's own language) took years of hard work, and composition took years more. Louis Feldman notes that "Josephus's admission (*Contra Apionem* 1.50 [= 1.9]) that he needed assistance in composing the version in Greek of the Jewish War illustrates that few attained the competence in the language necessary for reading and understanding Greek literature."[21]

The most persuasive studies of the use of Greek in Galilee in particular have been produced by Mark Chancey, who shows that scholars who maintain that Greek was widely spoken in the first century have based their views on very slim evidence, in which Palestinian data from over a number of centuries have been generalized into claims about the use of Greek in

Galilee in the first half of the first century.[22] There is, in fact, scant evidence that Greek was widely used outside of the major urban areas. People living in rural areas spoke almost exclusively Aramaic.

These and other studies have made it clear that there were few educated people in Palestine in the days of Peter. Those who did have the benefits of education would have been taught Hebrew to enable them to read the Torah, unless they came from a fabulously wealthy aristocratic family in a major city. These fortunate few would have made up the bulk of the 3 percent of Palestine who could read. Moreover, most of the 3 percent who could read could not compose a sentence or a paragraph. Most of those who could compose a paragraph could not compose an entire book. Most of those who could compose a book could not do so in a foreign language, Greek. Most of those who could do so, could not compose it in elegant Greek. Was Peter, a lower-class fisherman from rural Galilee, among that minuscule fraction of the Palestinian population who could compose books in elegant Greek? He was not wealthy. He would have had no time or resources for an education. Let alone an education in reading a foreign language. Let alone education in Greek composition. Acts 4:13 is probably right: Peter was illiterate.[23]

In pursuing this line of inquiry, we might ask what we can know about Peter as a person, prior to his becoming a disciple of Jesus. The answer is that we do not know much at all. The Gospels are consistent only in portraying him as a fisherman from the village of Capernaum in rural Galilee. We can assume that since he was a common laborer, he was not from the landed aristocracy; and since he was from rural Galilee, he would have spoken Aramaic. What can we say about his home "town" of Capernaum?

The historical and social insignificance of the place can be seen by the fact that it is not mentioned in any source, including the Hebrew Bible, prior to the writings of the New Testament. In the Gospels it is portrayed as a fishing village on the "sea" of Galilee (Matt. 4:13; 8:5; 11:23; 17:24; Mark 1:21; 2:1; 9:33; Luke 4:23, 31; 7:1; 10:15; John 2:12; 4:46; 6:17, 24, 59). It is sometimes called a πόλις, although, as we will see, that designation is certainly wrong. Josephus mentions it only because he fell off his horse nearby and was taken there (*Life* 72); he calls it, more accurately, a "village" (κώμη). The rabbinic literature mentions it as a place of the

minim (*Midr. Qoh*. 1.8.4; 7.26.3). There is no other literary evidence about the first-century town.

Most archaeologists associate it with Tel Hum, the ruins of which were discovered in 1838 by the American biblical archaeologist Edward Robbins, and identified as Capernaum in 1866 by the British engineer Charles Wilson. Based on the archaeological evidence, the best estimates place the population at around a thousand in the first century.[24] There is no suggestion from the material remains that it was a center of high intellectual activity. In fact, there is no evidence of intellectual life at all. As Jonathan Reed has pointed out, archaeologists have turned up no evidence of public buildings, such as shops or storage facilities. The local market must have been held in tents or booths in open unpaved public areas. The town was not built on any major international trade route; the Roman roads in the area are from the second century. There are no structures or materials associated with social elites (e.g., plaster surfaces, decorative frescoes, marble, mosaics, red ceramic roof tiles). The houses were constructed of rough stone basalt built without "the benefit of a skilled craftsman's techniques or tools," with insulation provided by mud or clay and smaller stones packed in the interstices, and thatched roofs.[25] There are no material remains of anything pagan; there are no inscriptions from the first century. Reed concludes that the population was "predominantly illiterate."

In short, Capernaum was a rather isolated and relatively unknown Jewish village in the backwaters of rural Galilee, with no evidence of any gentile presence. Its inhabitants were very poor. It was certainly not a polis, just an impoverished village.[26] If Bar-Ilan and Hezser are right that villages in rural Galilee could well have had literacy rates lower than 1 percent, maybe eight to ten persons in town would have been able to read in Peter's day. Or is this too generous? In any event, the handful of literate persons would have been the wealthiest and best-connected persons in the village. Simon Peter, on the other hand, was simply one of the local fishermen. Those in town who could read would be able to read Hebrew and would have spoken Aramaic. Could any of these handful compose a sentence? It is possible—but an entire book? It seems unlikely. Could they have composed a book in Greek? Almost certainly not. In highly literate Greek? It completely strains credibility.

What can we say, on the other hand, about the author of 1 Peter? It is widely noted that the language of the book is that of an educated Greek-

speaking author. J. H. Elliott notes that the polished Greek style "[reveals] numerous traces of literary refinement"[27] and "displays abundant affinities in vocabulary and style to classical writings, evidencing 'rhetorical competence' and 'literary refinement' of the author."[28] P. Achtemeier notes that, among other things, the author uses anaphora for parallel phrases; he employs antithetic as well as synthetic parallelism; he uses coordinate parallel expressions in which the first is negative, the second is positive, so as to stress a particular idea; in some places he produces a rhythmic structure and occasional long periods.[29] Twice the author uses εἰ with the optative, a refinement not found among most *koine* writers (3:14, 17). It seems scarcely possible that this is the writing of an Aramaic-speaking peasant from the hinterlands.

A related issue is the author's use of the Septuagint. Jews in rural Palestine familiar with Scripture would have heard it read in Hebrew. The vast majority of them would not have the opportunity or ability to study it on the page. The author of 1 Peter, on the other hand, is intimately familiar with the Jewish Scriptures. Apart from the quotation in 4:8, which is sometimes recognized as a direct translation of Proverbs 10:12 from the Hebrew,[30] the author invariably cites Scripture according to the Septuagint. This too is barely conceivable in a Galilean fisherman raised to speak Aramaic.

It is commonly argued that since Peter became a missionary to foreign lands after Jesus' death (Gal. 2:7; 1 Cor. 9:5), he must have picked up a knowledge of Greek in his travels. The reality, however, is that we simply have no way of knowing how Peter engaged in his missionary work. Did he use an interpreter? Did he learn enough Greek to communicate more easily? Even if he did so, that would scarcely qualify him to write a highly literary composition. Everyone in the Greek-speaking world could speak Greek. But only those with extensive training could learn to read. And only those who went past the first few years of training could learn how to compose a writing. Training in composition came only after everything else was mastered at the end of one's time with a grammatikos: alphabet, syllables, writing one's name, copying, reading scriptio continua, studying the poets, and so forth. It took years, plus a good deal of native talent, to become proficient. When exactly would Peter have found the time and resources to go back to school? And what evidence is there from the ancient world that

anyone received a primary and secondary education precisely as an adult? To my knowledge there is no evidence at all.

In combination with all the other evidence indicated at the outset, there is really only one viable conclusion. The book of 1 Peter was not written by Peter, but by someone falsely claiming to be Peter. It is, in short, a forgery.[31]

Attempts to Explain Away the Forgery

There have been numerous attempts to exonerate the author of 1 Peter of the charge that he wrote to mislead his reader into thinking he was Peter. As seen already, as far back as 1808 Cludius argued that 1:1 involved a textual corruption, where "the presbyter" was altered to read "the apostle Peter." A somewhat more interesting emendation was suggested by K. M. Fisher, who proposed that the book was originally written as a (Deutero-)Pauline epistle: rather than Πέτρος in 1:1 the author wrote Παῦλος..[32] This would make sense of the Pauline character of the letter otherwise, about which I will be speaking momentarily, although it would not get the author off the forger's hook, as in either case he would be claiming to be someone other than who he was.

Sometimes it is argued that Peter is the authority behind the letter, who commissioned someone else to write it for him. L. Goppelt and (many) others have suggested that it was written (ultimately) by Silvanus[33]; J. G. Eichhorn postulated that it was Mark[34]; Seufert put forward the author of Acts[35]; and Streeter, going yet further out on the precarious limb, proposed Ariston of Smyrna.[36] The one thing all of these guesses have in common is that they are based on virtually no evidence whatsoever. In addition, quite apart from the speculation involving specific names, we have already seen that there is nothing to suggest that it was an acceptable practice—or even a practice at all—for an "author" to have someone else write a work for him.[37] If he did commission such a work, this other person would be the author.

More commonly scholars have provided a toned-down version of the "commission" theory and suggested that the style, and possibly to some degree the substance, of the letter was provided by a secretary. More often than not, the secretary is named as Silvanus, in light of the conclusion of

5:12: διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖντοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι᾽ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα. Brox notes several of the problems with this identification of the Greek stylist behind the letter. For one thing, transferring responsibility for the wording of the letter to Silvanus does not actually solve the problem of the Greek, since he too was an Aramaic-speaking Jew from Palestine (Acts 15:22). Moreover, if he did compose the letter, then, once again, it is he, rather than Peter, who was its real author. But even more, it is implausible to think that Silvanus wrote the letter, given his self-praise, then, in 5:12, and his reference, to himself, as having written the letter "through" himself. But even more important, as is now widely recognized, to write a letter διά someone is not to use that person as a secretary but as the letter carrier. 5:12 is not indicating that Silvanus composed the letter but that he took it to its destination.[38]

The ultimate problem with this view, however, is the one I dealt with at length in the preceding chapter. There is virtually nothing to support the so-called secretary hypothesis, which instead of ancient evidence rests on scholarly speculation. And one should always try to think through how, exactly, the hypothesis is supposed to have worked in a specific instance. In the case of 1 Peter, Peter himself could not have dictated this letter in Greek to a secretary any more than he could have written it in Greek. To do so would have required him to be perfectly fluent in Greek, to have mastered rhetorical techniques in Greek, and to have had an intimate familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures in Greek. None of that is plausible. Nor can one easily think that he dictated the letter in Aramaic and the secretary (Silvanus or anyone else) translated it into Greek. The letter does not read like a Greek translation of an Aramaic original, but as an original Greek composition with Greek rhetorical flourishes. Moreover the letter presupposes the knowledge of the Greek Old Testament, so the person who composed the letter (whether orally or in writing) must have known the Scriptures in Greek.

Given the lack of evidence for the use of secretaries in the ways needed for Peter to stand as the ultimate authority behind the letter, one is left having to make a choice. Which view is more probable, historically? A scenario that does not have any known analogy (Peter asking someone else to write the treatise in his name in a different language) or a scenario that has a very large number of analogies, since it happened all the time?

Forgeries happened all the time. Surely that is the best explanation for the letter.

The Function of the Forgery

Apart from the name "Peter" at the outset of the letter and the reference to Rome ("Babylon") at the end, there is nothing in the book of 1 Peter to tie it specifically to the Petrine tradition. This makes the book decidedly different from all the other canonical books we have looked at so far, the Deutero-Pauline epistles that are clearly in trajectories that could trace themselves back to Paul, and 2 Peter, which goes out of its way to claim Petrine origins. In the case of 1 Peter, the authorial name is attached simply to provide apostolic credentials. There is nothing about the book itself that would make anyone think that it is Peter's in particular.

According to Galatians, Peter was the apostle-missionary to Jews (Gal. 2:8–9). But this book is not addressed to Jews, Peter's concern, but to gentiles. Thus 1:14 speaks of the "passions of your former ignorance" (a phrase hard to ascribe to Jews, but standard polemic against pagans); 1:18 refers to the readers as ransomed from the "futile manner of conduct passed down by their ancestors" (difficult to ascribe to Jews from a writer who sees Scripture as given by God); and most decisively, the author applies to his readers the words of Hosea 1:6, 9: "formerly you were not the people but now you are the people of God" (2:10). The author is speaking to converted pagans.[39] This is not the apostle to the Jews. And so, when he speaks of their "dispersion" in 1:1 he is not referring to the Jewish diaspora; these are Christians who are living away from their "true home" in heaven, temporarily.[40]

Moreover, there is nothing distinctive to Peter's views here, at least as these are known from the scant references to them in Paul, the only surviving author to mention Peter during his lifetime (e.g., Galatians 2). Nothing indicates that this author held to the ongoing importance and validity of the prescriptions of the Law: circumcision, kosher food regulations, Sabbath observance, Jewish festivals, for example. The significance of Scripture, for this author, is not that it provides guidelines for cultic activities in the community's life together. The "word of the Lord" is the gospel of Christ, not the Jewish Scriptures (1:25); the prophets looked

forward to Christ and are fulfilled in him and in his new people the Christians (1:12; 2:6, 10); Scripture is important chiefly for its high ethical demands (3:8–12).

There are self-conscious epistolary conventions in the reference to the addressees in 1:1 and the closing greetings of 5:12–13. But both passages make the reader think of Paul, not Peter. The missionary sphere is Asia Minor, where Paul established churches but which is never associated in other traditions with Peter. The two persons mentioned at the end, Silvanus and Mark, are best known as Pauline associates (Silvanus: 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Acts 15:22–18:5; Mark: Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11: Phlm. 24).[41] The injunction to "greet one another with a kiss" is almost straight from Paul (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26) and occurs nowhere else.

The only possible bit of verisimilitude that might make a reader think of Peter is in 5:1, where the author claims to have been a witness of Christ's sufferings. As widely noted, however, this scarcely sounds like the Peter of the rest of the Christian tradition, at least as it has been handed down to us, who fled after Jesus' arrest, denied his Lord three times, and was notably absent from the crucifixion.[42] It may be germane that the book of Acts stresses Peter as a witness to Jesus, his death, and resurrection (1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41). Here too there is no sense that Peter actually observed Jesus suffer, so that there is no reason to suspect that is what the author of 1 Peter 5:1 had in mind either. But even more important, Peter in these other passages is not said to be uniquely qualified as a witness. In every instance he is simply one of the apostolic band who bear testimony to Jesus and the salvation he has brought. There is nothing about 1 Peter 5:1, then, that would make a reader think of Peter in particular from among the faithful band that bore witness to Christ. And this band includes not just the twelve apostles in Acts: Stephen too is called a μάρτυς (22:20) as, notably, is Paul himself (22:15; 26:16).

In view of all these considerations, the older claim of A. Jülicher and E. Fascher remains valid: "One can absolutely insist that if the first word 'Peter' were missing from our 'letter,' nobody would have guessed it might have been authored by Peter."[43] In fact, as already suggested above, everything in this letter instead sounds like Paul. This was recognized long ago by F. C. Baur and the "school" that he established. Far too often the view has been tarnished by the guilt of that association, as it was attached

by Baur and his followers to his entire, complex, and now universally discounted theory of church history. But that attachment can itself be profitably abandoned without sacrificing all of the data that first brought it to mind. The Pauline character of 1 Peter stands out independently of the extravagant theories of the Tübingen school.[44]

It has nonetheless become virtually de rigueur to discount the Paulinisms of 1 Peter, as evidenced in such major commentaries as those of Goppelt, Achtemeier, and Elliott, and especially in such a full-length study as that of Jens Herzer.[45] Still, it should be pointed out that a book like Herzer's *Petrus oder Paulus* was perceived to be necessary precisely because 1 Peter does bear so many resemblances to a (deutero)Pauline letter, as we will see.

Herzer's lengthy analysis shows that the structure of the letter and the individual terms and phrases that it uses may sound like Paul, but they are not really like Paul. This is a fair enough observation, but it leads to a false conclusion, since the incongruity is precisely the point. If an author has his own point of view and wants to advance his own message, but at the same time wants to "sound" like someone else, he will use the characteristic words and phrases of the other, although obviously in his own sense. The result will be a book that on the surface sounds like that of the other author, but that underneath is quite different. That is why Ephesians and 2 Timothy seem both like and unlike Paul himself. On the surface there are numerous parallels to Paul's writings; dig deeper and they look odd by comparison. So too 1 Peter.

It is important in this connection to stress that no one is asking if Paul wrote 1 Peter. The question is whether the book sounds like Paul, and to pursue the question of why. The arguments that Herzer uses are precisely those that would be used to determine whether or not Paul was really the author of Colossians or 2 Thessalonians. But that is not the issue. Indeed, if 1 Timothy had Peter's name attached as the author, it would seem a lot less like one of Paul's writings than 1 Peter does. As Eugene Boring has observed in his recent survey of "First Peter in Recent Study," the pendulum has swung too far in the wrong direction, away from recognizing the Pauline character of the book.[46]

The structure of the book itself, as William Schutter has observed, is Pauline, with names of the sender and receiver, a tripartite division of the letter, and the conclusion. It is not a slavish imitation of the Pauline letters,

but the resemblances are palpable.[47] Yet more significant are the striking instances of important Pauline words and phrases and other features. The following list is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.

The mission field, in Asia Minor, as already noted, appears to be Paul's[48]

ἀποκάλυψις 1:7, 13; 4:13 (the word appears thirteen times in the Pauline corpus, e.g., Rom. 2:5; 8:19; 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Cor. 12:1, etc.)

God judges all impartially according to their deeds 1:17 (cf. Rom. 2 and 2 Cor. 5:1)

God raised Christ from the dead and "gave him glory" 1:21 (cf. Phil. 2:6–10)

The gospel as the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ 1:23 (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13)

Christian teaching as "milk" 2:2 (cf. 1 Cor. 3:2)

Giving oneself as a "sacrifice" 2:5 (cf. Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17)

The quotation of Isa. 28:16 in 2:6 (I am laying in Zion a stone …) and of Isa. 8:14 in 2:8 ("a stone of stumbling"; for both see Rom. 9:33)

The quotation of Hos. 2:25 in 2:10 (Rom. 9:25)

Opposition to "desires" connected with sarx 2:11 (cf. Gal. 5:16, 24)

"Be subject to every human institution" (2:13; cf. Rom. 13:1–7)

The view of Christ's death as a substitutionary atonement, 2:24, 3:18 (this should not be thought of as a view shared by all early Christian writers with Paul; it is missing from the speeches of Acts—including Paul's—and from the Gospel of Luke[49])

Dying to sin and living to righteousness 2:24 (Rom. 5:27–6:21)

"Do not return evil for evil" 3:9 (Rom. 12:17; verbatim agreements)

The "in Christ" formula 3:16; 5:10, 14 (in Paul, passim)

Baptism as salvation 3:21 (cf. Rom. 6:1–6)

Flesh and spirit applied to humans 4:6 (e.g., Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5:17)

"The end of all things is at hand" 4:7 (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11)

Preeminence of love 4:8 (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:14)

Χάρισμα 4:10 (cf. 1 Cor. 12)

Rejoicing in sufferings 4:13 (cf. 2 Cor. 6:10; 13:9 and generally 2 Corinthians, where Paul revels in his sufferings 2 Cor. 1:3–7; 4:7–12; 11:23–30)

Suffering with Christ leads to glory 4:13 (cf. Rom. 8:17)

And as noted, the conclusion in 5:12–14, including the references to Silvanus (cf. 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1); Mark (Phlm. 24; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11); and the injunction to "Greet one another with a kiss" (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26)

Some of these words and phrases were, or became, "traditional stock." But some are distinctively Pauline ("in Christ" etc.). And there are so many of them. It is striking that other features of the letter resonate with the Pauline tradition known from the Deutero-Pauline letters:

λυτρόω 1:18 (cf. Titus 2:14)

The Haustafel of 2:18–3:7 (cf. Col. 3:18–4:6 and Eph. 5:22–6:9)

Especially, within these instructions, the command for wives to be submissive 3:1, 5 (cf. 1 Tim. 2:11–15; Eph. 5:22; and the interpolation at 1 Cor. 14:34–35)

The opposition to braided hair, gold, and costly clothes 3:3 (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9)

Leaders are to oversee (ἐπισκοπέω) the flock 5:2 (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1, 2; Tit. 1:7);

Διάβολος 5:8 (cf. Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6, 7, 11; 2 Tim. 2:26; 3:3; Tit. 2:3; but never in Paul)

There are simply too many Pauline parallels to be written off. They are scattered throughout the whole of this short letter. It is not a matter, as sometimes thought, of literary dependence on one or the other of the Pauline epistles (e.g., Romans and Ephesians).[50] This author is someone claiming to be Peter who is trying to sound like Paul. As Schenk and Fischer have stated the case, this author "actualizes for a new situation the Pauline heritage—and that in the name of Peter!"[51]

The counterarguments by those who refuse to see Pauline influences on the letter can be seen in their starkest form in the observation of Andreas Lindemann that the author of 1 Peter does not advance a view of justification by faith.[52] One could just as well argue, on the same ground,

that 2 Corinthians is not Pauline. Paul Achtemeier too moves in the wrong direction, when he points out words and phrases of Paul not found in the letter ("flesh," "church," θλίψις, the old and new Adam, the body of Christ, righteousness by faith apart from the Law, the tension of Israel and the Church).[53] No one is claiming, or should claim, that the author of 1 Peter wanted to hit upon every Pauline theologoumenon in his brief letter. The author of the Pastoral epistles certainly did not do so, but one would be very hard pressed indeed to argue, on that ground, that he did not go out of his way to make his reader think that the letters were written by Paul. 1 Peter sounds much more like Paul than Titus does.

And it sounds much more like Paul than the Paul of Acts does. The Paul of Acts preaches to gentiles about the importance of Jesus without ever mentioning that his death was salvific. One could go a step farther. The Peter of 1 Peter sounds a lot more like Paul than the *Peter* of Acts does—even though Acts has as one of its overarching agendas to reconcile the two apostles theologically. The Peter of Acts does sound like the Paul of Acts (as opposed to the Paul of the undisputed letters); the Peter of 1 Peter sounds like the Paul of the letters (both undisputed and Deutero-). This is not necessarily because he happened to have access to the same letters of Paul that we have—although he may well have—but because however he inherited his Pauline traditions of Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology, he used them, to good effect, to make the letter written by "Peter" sound like Paul.

This is not to say that the author lacked an agenda of his own. In fact there are distinctive features of the letter that make it clearly stand out from what now survive as the undisputed Pauline letters.[54] Although the many differences from the Pauline letters are interesting, it is important to stress again that this author was not trying to write a Deutero-Pauline letter, claiming to be Paul. He was writing a letter claiming to be Peter. But the letter, written in the name of Peter, sounds very much like a letter of Paul. So why did the author not simply claim to be Paul?

Reasons for the Forgery

The most widely proffered, but not fully convincing, explanation for why an author would claim to be Peter when writing like Paul is simply that he is trying to effect some kind of reconciliation between the two apostles,

widely known to have quarreled publicly and widely thought to be at loggerheads about major theological and practical issues (as we will see at greater length in the next chapter). This is the view expressed crisply, for example, by Wolfgang Trilling, who (without invoking Baur) stresses that the names used at the beginning and end of the letter are key. Peter himself was known to be a leading authority figure in the church; Mark and Silvanus were Paul's coworkers for the church of Asia Minor. And strikingly, all three were closely tied with the church in Jerusalem, whence their mission started. And so the letter is meant to effect a broad reconciliation of Paul with the other apostles and the Jerusalem church, and to show that these Jerusalem apostles embraced Paul's teachings, rather than rejected them.[55]

There is much to commend this view, as we will see. But the problem with it and with others of its ilk (going back to Baur) is that it refuses to consider the actual content of the letter of 1 Peter in order to explain its pseudepigraphic function. Surely this is not the best way to proceed. The subject matter of the letter must have some bearing on the reason it was written.

This was recognized by Norbert Brox in an important article that lamented the fact that so much effort had been placed in determining the authorship of 1 Peter and exploring its Paulinism without ever considering the main point of what the letter is actually about.[56] Oddly enough, whereas Brox provides a clear assessment of the content of the letter, he never circles back, in the article, to the question of why the letter should be written in the name of Peter in terms that sound like Paul. Earlier he had put forth a rather feeble argument that since the letter was written in Rome it was naturally attributed to the chief authority there, Peter. The association of Peter with Rome may indeed be significant, but there is no reason, if the ascription is false, to think that the alleged location of its origin is true: it may just as well be that since the letter was written by "Peter" it was said to be sent from Rome ("Babylon") because of Peter's close associations with the place. And we are still left with the question that Brox resolutely refuses to answer: Why Peter in particular? Why not Paul, also an authority on Roman soil? And is there really nothing in the substance of the letter, rather than the place of its origin, that makes sense of its Paulinisms?[57]

The letter is rich with themes and subthemes, but the one issue that ties together most of its sundry parts is the emphasis on suffering and endurance. The term πάσχω occurs more frequently in this short five-chapter epistle than in any other book of the New Testament—more than Luke-Acts combined, though suffering is a major concern there as well. For the author of 1 Peter, Christ suffered for the sake of others (2:21–24; 3:18), and his followers will follow in his steps and suffer as well (2:21; 4:1, 13). The believers' sufferings do not come from imperial authorities, so far as we can tell; these are to be obeyed as those who keep the public order (2:13–14). Instead, the opposition is unofficial and local, former friends and colleagues who are upset that, with their change of heart and lifestyle, the "Christians" no longer participate with them in their social and civic lives. These opponents of the Christians strike out at them in response (4:1–6). The Christians are to give no cause for persecution. They are to engage in no wrong-doing to warrant opposition (2:12; 3:16–17; 4:12–19). But they are always to be ready to explain why they live and believe as they do when called to account for it (3:15–16). Christians are constantly to recall that they are "exiles" in this world and will, as a result, be mistreated in this foreign land. But their real home is above, where they can expect an imperishable inheritance and great reward if they persevere to the end (1:1, 3–9, 11; 5:9–10).

The question of why this letter was forged must relate to the question of why it was written. It was written, presumably, to provide comfort and encouragement to Christians scattered in various places (the fictional designation: five provinces of Asia Minor) who were experiencing opposition and persecution at the hands of their former companions among the pagans. Why, as a subsidiary matter, was it written in the name of Peter in the style of Paul?

It may be worth observing, in this connection, that the book of Acts shares the dominant concern of 1 Peter with the problem of Christian persecution and suffering, and at the same time is completely committed to the question of the unity of the church, as manifest in the unity of the apostolic band. The presentation of the life, ministry, and proclamation of Paul in Acts is, in no small measure, affected by the author's concern to show that Paul aligned himself in toto with the Jerusalem church. And so, in contrast to Paul's own claims in Galatians, Acts indicates that immediately after his conversion he went to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles (Acts 9);

in further contrast with Galatians, where it appears that Paul needed to use some rhetorical force to persuade the other apostles to agree with his law-free gospel, the author of Acts portrays Peter as the first to recognize that gentiles do not need to observe Jewish Law to be followers of Jesus (Acts 10–11). The Jerusalem conference itself is a virtual love fest in which James, Peter, Paul, and everyone else who matters is in complete agreement (Acts 15). Yet again in contrast to Galatians, where the fall out in Antioch appears severe and possibly permanent (Gal. 2:11–14), in Acts Peter and Paul are portrayed as in complete harmony. So aligned are they that it is virtually impossible to distinguish their public proclamations: Peter sounds like Paul and Paul sounds like Peter.

These ultimate concerns of Acts, involving both external circumstances of the church (persecution and suffering) and internal affairs (complete harmony of the apostles), are intimately related. The harmony of the church in the face of suffering demonstrates that God is at work in the community, despite the hardships that it faces; he is creating a harmonious body in the midst of attempts at disruption. In fact, hardships are overcome, in no small measure, through the unified efforts of the Christians in the face of it. Where there are splits and divisions in the community, the power of the group is threatened to dissipate (Ananias and Sapphira in ch. 5; Simon Magus in ch. 8; the "men from Judea" in ch. 15). It is only through the forceful and God-driven power of harmony that internal problems are resolved, allowing the church to stand as one in the face of external opposition. In short, suffering requires a unified front.

This lesson is not restricted to the account of Acts. To pick just one other example we might consider the book of 1 Clement, written at roughly the same time as Acts, near the end of the first century, and like 1 Peter, closely connected to Rome. Here the leading issue is harmony in the church, and the problems of schism among the leaders. The leadership in the church of Corinth has been usurped and the Roman church is writing in order to restore order, in this case by compelling the upstarts who have taken over places of leadership to give up their positions and return their predecessors to power. The book is about much more than that—as frequently noted, it is a very long letter indeed—but the overarching theme is unity, so much so that it can well be classified as a kind of literary "homonoia speech."[58]

At the outset of the letter, in order to show the terrible results of jealousy and envy (endemic to the Corinthian church and its leadership), the

anonymous author points to examples from the Old Testament, before giving examples "in quite recent times." These latter are "athletic contenders … of our own generation" who suffered persecution from those who were envious of them, struggled, in fact, "even to death." He cites then just two "recent" examples among "the good apostles," Peter and Paul.

> Peter, who because of unjust jealousy bore up under hardships not just once or twice, but many times; and having thus borne his witness he went to the place of glory that he deserved. Because of jealousy and strife Paul pointed the way to the prize for endurance. Seven times he bore chains; he was sent into exile and stoned; he served as a herald in both the East and the West; and he received the noble reputation for his faith.… And so he was set free from this world and transported up to the holy place, having become the greatest example of endurance. (1 Clem. 5:4–7)

In this case the "envy and jealousy" come not from inside the community, but from outside. But it is striking that in a letter stressing the homonoia of the community, the author appeals to examples of suffering, and points to just these two apostles, Peter and Paul, and no others, unified with each other especially in their suffering.

1 Peter shares with Acts and 1 Clement this concern of Christian endurance in the face of persecution. It is allegedly sent to the churches of Asia Minor, where the disharmony of the apostles was particularly well known, as evidenced in Paul's comments about his controversy with Peter in his letter to the Galatians, sent to one of the provinces named in 1 Peter 1:1. The letter of 1 Peter, directed to suffering, at the same time shows that the apostolic band is harmonized. Much as we find in the speeches of Acts, Peter is made to sound like Paul, embracing theological views very much in accord with his apostolic companion. By inverse logic, the words of Paul are now shown to sound like the voice of Peter. There is no split in the leadership of the church, at the highest levels. Peter and Paul, later shown to be unified in their sufferings in Rome, are shown to be at harmony in a letter allegedly written from Rome. It is Peter, writing as if he were Paul, who urges the Christians to stand firm in their trials, to suffer only for the name of Christ, not for any wrongdoing. Moreover, they are to be harmonized among themselves: hence the Haustafel, which functions in

much the same way as it does in the Deutero-Pauline letters, to promote unity in the body among people in various social relations to one another.

In short, 1 Peter is a book that shows Peter and Paul standing face-to-face and agreeing point-by-point. If Christians are to face an antagonistic world with a unified front, then the unity of the ultimate leaders of the church—the apostles themselves—is particularly important. To show the deeply rooted harmony of the church in the face of ongoing opposition, an unknown author wrote a book of encouragement, claiming to be Peter, but sounding like Paul. This is a forgery that ostensibly deals with suffering of the Christians and that implicitly deals with the necessary corollary, the unity of the apostolic band.[59]

SECOND PETER

We have already considered 2 Peter in relation to its polemic against certain eschatological views. We can now look at the book more closely for its fervent support of the person and writings of Paul. As seen, 2 Peter has a completely different focus from 1 Peter. Here the problem addressed is not suffering caused by outsiders to the community, but false views promoted by insiders. These views concern the delay of the parousia, and the author is at great pains to emphasize that those who maintain a nonapocalyptic eschatology in the face of Jesus' non-appearance are not just misguided but are evil to the core, and profligate to boot. Several features of the second letter tie it to the first: it too is forged in the name of Peter, and precisely as his "second" letter (3:1). The salutations of the letters are close to each other in wording; the author who was a "witness to the sufferings of Christ" in the first letter (5:1) is one of the "eyewitnesses to his majesty" (1:16) in the second. Both letters warn against carousing either with former companions (in the first letter) or in the manner of the false teachers (in the second). Both stress the teachings of the prophets. And both are written, in part, to show Peter's support of Paul, indirectly in the first letter and far more directly and obviously in the second. Here Paul is invoked explicitly as an authority, indeed, his writings are deemed to be Scripture (3:15–16). Never did the two great apostles of the church appear more united.

The Pauline Character of the Opponents

The opponents attacked by the forger of the letter come from inside the Christian community.[60] They are those who had once come "to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," but who came to be "entangled" and "overpowered" by the "defilements of the world" so that their "last state has become worse for them than the first" (2:20). They once knew the "way of righteousness" but they turned back from it (2:21). The miscreants attacked in chapter 2 are the "scoffers" of chapter 3, who, "following their own passions," deny that there is yet to be an apocalyptic crisis with the reappearance of Jesus (3:3–4). Just as the secessionists from the Johannine community were labeled "anti-Christs" (1 John 2:18)—when they may well have viewed themselves as true adherents of the Christian gospel—so too these opponents are said to be "denying the Master who purchased them" (2:1).

More specifically, these opponents are Pauline Christians. They have Paul's writings, they interpret these writings, and they evidently treat them as authoritative texts, using them to establish their own perspectives, deemed by the author as highly aberrant (3:15–16). It is worth reflecting on the fact that the forger of this letter attacks these opponents for their licentious and loose living while admitting that their views derive from an apostolic authority, even if in corrupted form. This too seems reminiscent of polemics within the Johannine community, where some members have split off from the others (1 John 2: 18–19) because of certain Christological views (Christ did not come "in the flesh") that the author claims led to willfully sinful lifestyles (3:4–10; 4:7–12; they refuse even to love one another). Theology and ethics were intimately linked in the minds of early Christian polemicists.

But what is there in the Pauline tradition that could possibly lead to the views attacked by the author of 2 Peter? We have already considered the "Pauline" eschatology. With respect to the ethics, is it possible that the persons attacked in 2 Peter derived these as well not from other sources, or from their naturally reprobate natures and desires, but from Pauline teaching, taken in a direction that the author of the letter opposes? More specifically, is it possible that they, like the authors of Ephesians and Titus, interpreted Paul's teaching of justification "apart from the works of the Law" to mean that what mattered was faith, not doing "good deeds" (see Eph. 2:8–9; Tit. 3:5)? We would be hard pressed to affirm that they actually took such a view to the extreme of supporting acts of moral degeneracy, but

the view could be seen as leading in that direction by the author of 2 Peter. Some such view of moral living, as we will see, is attacked by James in a thinly disguised attack on Paul, or at least on a later interpretation of Paul, presumably among Pauline Christians. Specifically we learn that the opponents of 2 Peter "promise freedom" (2:19), again, a possible reminiscence of Paul's own teaching, of the believers' "freedom from the Law."

The opponents are also said to "despise authority" and to "revile the glorious ones" in 2:10. It is interesting, in this connection, to observe the opposite position evidently taken in Colossians, in its polemic against those who "worship angels" (Col. 2:18). As we will see later, the issue comes to a head with the letter of Jude, where a direct polemic against the view adopted by Colossians may be involved. In either event, as with the teachings of eschatology and ethics, the status of angelic beings may have been differently evaluated in various parts of the Pauline community.

The Forged Counter-Position

The author of 2 Peter is principally concerned to attack the Pauline corruptions of the faith by proffering the "correct" interpretation of Paul, in the name of his fellow apostle, Peter. In particular, Peter and Paul see eye-to-eye on the crucial issues of eschatology and ethics. It is interesting to note, as well, that by implication they see eye-to-eye on the interpretation of Scripture. This is an important issue because of what we know about the historical Paul and Peter, and their falling out in Antioch precisely over the understanding of the relevance of Scripture, specifically Scripture's kosher food laws and their implications (Gal. 2:11–14). We have no way of knowing how the historical Peter responded to Paul's charges of hypocrisy, and there are reasons for thinking that, in the general opinion of those present, Peter got the better of the argument.[61] And in particular, we have no way of knowing whether the deep rift that so obviously troubled Paul, all those years later, was ever healed. But we can know that the issue involved the interpretation of Scripture and the question of its relevance to matters of real importance to the ongoing life of the Christian community, comprising both Jew and gentile.

Some later authors went out of their way to smooth over the differences between the two apostolic leaders, none more so than the book of Acts, as

we shall see. But the efforts at palliation are at least as evident in the forged letter of Peter we are considering here. In this case Paul's views—on all topics—are compatible with Scripture; in fact they themselves are Scripture (3:15–16). Peter is the one who has the correct interpretation of Paul's writings, which he cherishes and regards as an ultimate authority for the life of the community. Peter and Paul are completely aligned on all matters of authority and interpretation. There is no rift here. By implication, then, even where Paul is not explicitly invoked—as in the attack on the licentious living of those who embrace "freedom" in chapter 2—he is implicitly on board with the polemic. This, then, is Paul fighting against Paul, the true Paul attacking the misinterpretations of Paul. And all in the name of Peter.

It would be interesting to know what the real, historical Paul—not to mention the real, historical Peter—would have to say about all this. With Peter we are handicapped, in having not a single word from his pen (since, indeed, he never used a pen). But we do have the writings of Paul, and it is worth noting that the views he stakes out in his letters are not those attacked in this one, advanced on his authority (3:15–16). There was not just a two-way split in the Pauline community, between those holding to an apocalyptic eschatology and those holding to a realized eschatology or between those living "lawlessly" and those insisting on a strict morality. As normally happens in history, things were far messier, with groups and individuals holding allegiance to Paul but advocating a variety of views, which covered the entire spectrum of options. How could that be? How could later Christians claiming Paul as an authority advocate differing—even opposing views—in his name? It should always be recalled that "authorities" may authorize certain views, but they do not necessarily dictate what those views will be.

And so, whereas Paul insisted that the end of all things was soon to happen with the reappearance of Jesus from heaven, and that he himself would be living to see it (e.g., 1 Thess. 4:13–18), other Paulinists—some in his own lifetime, but even more later—insisted that even though there was indeed to be an apocalyptic crisis with the coming of Jesus, there was a divinely ordained delay in the proceedings. That is roughly the view of 2 Thessalonians and 2 Peter, and the view of the Paulinist who produced Luke and Acts. Others of Paul's followers continued to think there would be *something* yet to come, in some undefined moment of the future, but that there was no urgency about the matter and that this was not a central

component of the Pauline message. That is the view of such works as Colossians and, especially, Ephesians. And yet other Paulinists maintained that the end had already come in some sense in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and that believers were already enjoying the full benefits of salvation in the here and now. That is the view that Ephesians may be leaning toward, but it does not come to full expression in any of the Pauline writings that have survived from the early centuries—only in the views that are opposed as arising within Pauline communities, by Pauline believers who have left us no writings, such as the opponents of 2 Timothy and 2 Peter.

Paul himself was a lightning rod for all of these positions. Moreover, just as he was said to have advocated a "lawless" lifestyle, possibly in his own lifetime (Rom. 3:8), so too his authority was invoked by advocates of strict morality. In particular that happens here, in this letter of 2 Peter, which insists both that lawless living is contrary to Pauline teaching and that on this, and all other matters, the two great apostles stood in firm agreement.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

We have already seen two of the major thematic concerns of the book of Acts in our discussion of 1 Peter: the suffering of the Christians at the hands of antagonistic outsiders and the far-flung unity of the church, seen in particular in the harmony between Paul, the ultimate hero of the account, and the Jerusalem apostles, especially Peter, who dominate the action in the first third of the narrative. The latter theme begins to appear almost immediately after Paul's conversion in chapter 9. After leaving Damascus, he heads directly to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and, with Barnabas's assistance, becomes their close associate (Acts 9:26–29). It is in the next chapter that the law-free Gospel for the gentiles is revealed in a vision—not to Paul, but to Peter, who acts on his new knowledge and converts gentiles in the Cornelius episode. It is Peter, then, who announces to the Jerusalem apostles that gentiles have received the spirit and been "given repentance unto life" (11:18). Paul's views are not controversial in this book. They are the views of the apostles before him, who act out their convictions of the law-free Gospel to the gentiles even before he is on the mission field, and who, most famously, endorse his own missionary activities at the climactic Jerusalem conference in chapter 15. Here Paul scarcely needs to defend himself, as Peter, Barnabas, and James all unite in

affirming his mission to the gentiles in the most emphatic terms. The apostles of Jerusalem then send Paul back to his mission field with their blessing and enthusiastic support. Paul's mission in this account is both divinely sanctioned and wholeheartedly endorsed by the leaders of Jerusalem.

The apostolic unity is set out somewhat more subtly in the speeches of Acts, where, as I noted before, one is hard pressed to differentiate between the words of the Galilean fisherman and the Hellenistic intellectual. Paul's speeches sound little like the Paul we know from the surviving letters. It is likely that the earlier speeches in Acts are not those of the historical Peter either. Their unity of content results from the fact that they derive from the mind and pen of one man, the author of the narrative.

In order to effect this astounding harmony of Paul and his apostolic predecessors, especially Peter but also, notably, James, the author was compelled to smooth over their real, historical differences. The historical Peter had a serious falling out with the historical Paul, prompted by the appearance of people from James, when they both were in Antioch (Galatians 2). None of that can be found in Acts, where Paul's message and lifestyle conform closely with that of the Jerusalem apostles before him, including most emphatically the head of the Jerusalem church, James, and its leading spokesperson, Peter. This internal harmony is related to the broader concerns of Acts, in particular its celebration of the importance of Paul, his divine conversion and commission, his incredible miraculous powers, his persuasive preaching and teaching, his conversion of Jews and gentiles in moving the gospel through the world to the capital city of the empire, Rome itself. The book is, in no small measure, an encomium on Paul. But is it a forgery?

It is important to remember that a literary forgery, as I am using the term, refers to a text that makes a false authorial claim. In most Christian forgeries, an author claims to be someone other than who he really is in order to authorize his writing. In Chapter Three I explained a variety of ways authors make false authorial claims, one of which I termed an "embedded forgery." I repeat that discussion here: there are a number of writings from antiquity that do not explicitly claim to be authored by a well-known person, but instead use embedding devices, such as first-person narratives, without differentiating between the first person and the author. In these instances the reader naturally assumes that the person speaking in the

first person is the writer of the account. A good example occurs in the Ascension of Isaiah, whose author does not self-identify at the outset, but instead provides an anonymous historical framework that involves Isaiah and that appears very much like the prose narrative sections of the book of Isaiah itself. Part way through the narrative, however, and at key points throughout, the revelation given through Isaiah begins to be delivered in the first person. The author of the account does not indicate that he is now quoting someone else. The reader assumes that the author has begun speaking about what he himself experienced. This provides an unimpeachable authority for the account: it is revealed by none other than Isaiah. The author is not Isaiah, however. This was a later writer making an implicit, but false, authorial claim. The book, then, is what I have been calling an embedded forgery.

The book of Acts, like the Ascension of Isaiah, is anonymous. But does it make a false authorial claim? The irony is that if it does so, the claim is made anonymously. That is to say, on no reckoning can Acts be termed pseudepigraphic (i.e., it is not a book inscribed with a false name). But it is also to be recalled that there are other instances of what I earlier termed non-pseudepigraphic forgeries, in which an author claims to be someone other than who he is, without actually naming himself. This is true, for example, of Ecclesiastes, whose author is allegedly the son of David ruling in Jerusalem, fantastically rich and wise. The author does not use the name Solomon, but that is clearly who he is claiming to be. He was not Solomon, however, but an unknown author living centuries later. Ecclesiastes is, then, a non-pseudepigraphic forgery. So too, I will be arguing, is the book of Acts, whose author wanted his readers to understand that he was for a time a traveling companion of Paul, even though he was not. This author used clear embedding devices in order to make his claim good. The claim functions to authorize his account, as an eyewitness to some of the events he narrates and as a bona fide authority even for those events that he did not personally observe. It was a remarkable strategy, and it proved to be extraordinarily effective, as readers to this day continue to attribute the book to Paul's traveling companion, Luke.

The "We-Passages"

The key to any discussion of the authorship of Acts is provided by the so-called "we-passages" that occur on four occasions (depending on how one accounts), narratives in which the author shifts from third- to first-person plural narrative. The scholarship on these passages may seem daunting in its scope, but it is even more disheartening in its execution, one suggestion even more implausible than the one preceding. Several full-length studies have been devoted to the question, the most recent by William S. Campbell, but including earlier important contributions by C. Thornton and J. Wehnert.[62]

The four passages in question are Acts 16:10–17, 20:5–15, 21:1–18, and 27:1–28:16. They include first-person-plural travel narratives (with Paul) from Troas to Philippi (16:10–11), from Philippi to Troas (20:5–6), from Troas to Miletus (20:13–15), from Miletus to Caesarea (21:1–9), from Caesarea to Jerusalem (21:15–17), from Caesarea to Fair Havens (27:1–8), and from Malta to Rome (28:11–16). It cannot be argued that first-person narrative is simply Luke's preferred technique for travelogues, given the third-person narratives of 14:20–28, 18:18–23, and elsewhere. But on the whole, the travel sections of these passages are narrated in the first person, and the scenes after travel in the third person.

In beginning to explore and explain these passages, it is important to note that they are not the only occurrence of the first person in the book. On the contrary, the author introduces his narrative in the first-person singular in the prefatory dedication to Theophilus. On any reckoning, the "we" of the later narratives must be seen as inclusive of the "I" of the preface. In other words, however one explains the we-passages from the perspectives of literary or source criticism, the author is making a back reference to an earlier passage, and thereby claiming not only to be the author of the narrative but also a participant in parts of it. This will be the gist of the argument that follows, that Acts is not simply a collection of narratives about the earliest Christian community. Its author wants to make an authorial claim to have been an eyewitness to some of the events that he narrates, so as to authenticate the narrative claims he makes, even though many of these claims can be shown to be false, as can his assertion to have been an eyewitness to the life and preaching of Paul.

I begin the analysis with several observations about the passages in question. First, it should be observed that the we-sections are sometimes interrupted by short third-person narratives (20:9–12, 27:9–14, 27:21–26,

28:3–6), and that they contain a number of details that appear, at least, to be unnecessary to the narrative. These details, however, serve a useful function, as recognized by Samuel Byrskog: "Precisely, then, as seemingly ad hoc pieces of information within passages in first-person plural, they provide, whether historically accurate or not, the narrative with a realistic stamp."[63]

By far the most surprising aspect of the we-passages, however, apart from their existence at all, is their frequently noted abrupt beginnings and endings. It is their sudden and unexplained disappearance that is most unsettling. When did the author leave the company and for what reason? These and other related problems can be seen in the first of the passages, 16:10–17. How is it that "we" included Paul in 16:10 and 11, but then are differentiated from Paul in 16:17? That may make sense if an author had wanted to start easing out of the use of the first-person plural as a narrative ploy, but it is hard to understand if the narrative is a historically accurate description of a real life situation by an author who was there. Moreover, if "we" were with Paul when he rebuked the spirit of the possessed girl, how is it that only Paul and Silas were seized, not "we"? Did the eyewitness leave the company in 16:18 suddenly and for no expressed reason? If so, why is he still in Philippi much later in 20:6?

So too in the next passages in question, in chapters 20 and 21. Why is the narrative provided in the first person when traveling to Miletus (20:15) but then shifts to the third person once there? Was the author not present for the prayer in v. 36? Why did they not bring "us" to the ship in 20:38 if he sailed with Paul in the next verse? And in the next chapter, why does the author accompany Paul to Jerusalem in 21:18 and then disappear without an explanation or a trace in 21:19?

I will be arguing in what follows that the best explanation for these abrupt beginnings and endings is that the first-person pronoun was used selectively to place the author in the company of Paul, thereby authenticating his account. As Byrskog expresses the matter: "By presenting a narrator who speaks in first-person plural, the author himself appears, albeit vaguely, as present in the arena of history. Clearly, from a narrative point of view, the author is included among the 'we,' and that is sufficient.… The 'we' are, within the narrative of Acts, historical witnesses to the details and vividness of Paul's words and deeds."[64]

Various Solutions and Their Problems

The we-passages have generated a considerable amount of spilled ink. Nearly all the explanations can be summarized under four rubrics.

1. The Author of Acts Was a Companion of Paul on Some of His Travels

This explanation of the we-passages is the oldest and probably the most widespread. It was the dominant view before the modern critical study of the New Testament began. It is riddled with problems, however, and is rarely supported among scholars outside the ranks of the theologically conservative proponents of the complete historical accuracy of the narrative. For in fact, whatever one might say about "Luke," he does not appear to have been exceptionally knowledgeable about Paul, his life, and his message.[65] There are simply too many basic, fundamental, and detailed discrepancies between what Paul says about himself in the letters that he almost certainly wrote and the accounts of Acts. There is no need here to provide a detailed delineation. The discrepancies involve (1) his itinerary, with issues both large and small: after his conversion did Paul immediately go to speak with the apostles in Jerusalem, as Acts claims, or not, as Paul claims, emphatically, with an oath, in Gal. 1:18–20? When he traveled to Athens, was Timothy with him as in 1 Thessalonians 3, or not as in Acts 17? Was the Jerusalem conference Paul's third visit to Jerusalem or not? And on and on. (2) His missionary message. How could a companion of Paul think that Paul proclaimed idolatry as simply an honest mistake for which God was forgiving (as in Acts 17; contrast Romans 1)? Or how could an eyewitness and associate of Paul neglect to mention his theology of the cross? How could Paul preach to a crowd of gentiles and not even mention that it is Jesus' death that puts a person into a right standing before God (14:15–17; 17:22–31; cf. 24:10–21: and elsewhere, even to Jews)? (3) His life. The general portrayal of Paul as The Good Jew who never did anything in violation of the Jewish Law, rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, is hard indeed to reconcile with the Paul of the letters, who had no qualms at all with being a gentile to the gentiles, and who fell out with Peter on just these grounds.

2. The Author Used a Source for These Passages

More commonly it is thought that the author of Acts, not a participant in Paul's mission at any time, made use of a written document—usually thought of as a travel itinerary—that he incorporated more or less wholesale into his account without bothering to edit out the first-person-plural pronouns.[66] Sometimes the theory is made a bit more complex, sophisticated, and, well, creative. In his detailed, full-length study, for example, Thornton maintains that the "itinerary" involved travel notes taken by Titus, provided to Luke (the real Luke, author of Acts) in scenes at which he, the author Luke, was actually present.[67] Oddly enough, Thornton argues that the "we" figure was not necessarily with Paul *only* for those events that are narrated in the first person, a concession that somewhat undercuts his case. Nor does the theory explain the abrupt beginnings and endings of the we-passages. Equally imaginative is the view of Wehnert that the passages come from an actual eyewitness—in this case, Silas—who was therefore reliable, and who passed along his account to the author orally; the first-person narrative was used, then, in order to signal to the reader that at this point the account was based on a source who was present at the event.[68] Similarly, in a more recent but much briefer analysis, Wedderburn maintains that the first person is used to signal a source who was actually present, as opposed to a written source. As it turns out, mirabile dictu, that source was none other than Luke.[69]

The highly speculative character of these particular views has not done much to win many converts, but they must be acknowledged as serious attempts to grapple with an intractable problem. Their real difficulty, however, has been widely recognized: there is nothing in the passages, other than the first-person pronoun, to raise any suspicion that we are dealing with material that has come from a source.[70] The passages are not distinct, stylistically or in any other significant way, from the surrounding narratives and they do not cohere, stylistically or in any other way, with each other in any unusual way. The stylistic unity of the passages with the rest of Acts was recognized as long ago as Harnack and emphasized in a classic study by Cadbury.[71] The most thorough study has been by Darryl Schmidt, who finds no "significant patterns that characterize all four sections" and notes that those syntactical constructions that seem noteworthy within them can be found elsewhere in Acts. Schmidt, in short, did not discover "any basis in the syntactic style of the text for isolating this material from the rest of

Acts. It is neither uniform enough or distinctive enough to make that possible."[72]

And so, the stylistic unity of the work shows that whoever wrote the rest of the narrative of Acts also wrote the we-passages. Moreover, one cannot argue that the author edited out the stylistic oddities of the source otherwise to make it conform to his narrative, since the reason for thinking that the passages come from a different source in the first place is a stylistic oddity (the shift in person). If he edited everything else, why did the author of Acts not edit the pronouns? It is not convincing to argue that the first person pronouns were left in the source—or added to it—precisely in order to show that at this point of the narrative the author is using a source, even a particularly reliable source. When are first-person pronouns ever used in narratives to indicate the presence of a source?[73] What they are used for, with remarkable frequency, as will be seen shortly, is to verify that the author was an eyewitness to the accounts being narrated. First-person narratives authorize an account as having come from someone who would know the truth of what he relates, not in order to indicate that the author has used someone else's account.

3. The Use of First-Person Accounts in Narratives of Sea-Travel

First suggested by E. Plümacher and argued most influentially by Vernon Robbins, this is the view that the author of Acts was following standard narratological practice from antiquity, where travels on sea were typically narrated in the first person.[74] As Robbins puts it, after citing examples from the Odyssey, the Aeneid, Alcaeus, Heraclitus, Aeschylus, Varro, and others, "There is a natural propensity for portraying sea voyages through the medium of first-person narration."[75]

As attractive as the view appeared for a time, it has come under sustained attack by those who have looked yet deeper into the matter.[76] John Reumann, for example, rejects "the notion that 'we' for a sea voyage was a 'classical convention' in antiquity, let alone a necessary feature of style."[77] And after giving numerous counterexamples, Susan Praeder concludes: "There are first person and third person sea voyages in ancient literature, no passage is set in first person narration simply because it is a sea voyage, and there are no convincing parallels to the shifts from third person narration to first person narration in Acts."[78] Instead, significantly

for my purposes here, "first person and third person narration are signs of authorial participation and nonparticipation, respectively."[79]

In my view, that is exactly right. With the case of Acts, however, the claim to participation is false, since the author was not, in fact, a companion of Paul. And a book that makes a false authorial claim is a forgery.

4. The Author Is Making a False Claim to Have Been an Eyewitness

Historians were commonly maligned in antiquity for not knowing what they were talking about. Polybius, for example attacks the historical narratives of Timaeus because all of his knowledge was based on book learning, rather than personal experience. His fault: "he does not write from the evidence of his eyes."[80] As a nonparticipant in the kinds of stories he narrates "he is guilty of many errors and misstatements, and if he ever comes near the truth he resembles those painters who make their sketches from stuffed bags." He is like other historians "who approach the work in this bookish mood. We miss in them the vividness of facts, as this impression can only be produced by the personal experience of the author." Polybius goes on, then, to malign historical writers "who have not been through the events themselves."[81]

In his first preface, the author of Luke-Acts stresses his personal involvement in doing his research (book learning, of sorts) into the events he is to narrate (Luke 1:1–4). As we have seen, the first person "we" necessarily embodies the "I" of the two prefaces to the two works. It is best to understand the use of the plural pronoun in Acts as an authorizing technique. In using the pronoun in this way Luke is not—contrary to what is widely claimed—doing something highly unusual in Christian or other literature. Quite the contrary, the first-person pronoun (both singular and plural) was widely used in ancient texts, Christian and otherwise, precisely in order to provide authority for the account, as a rapid survey can show. This list provides a number of instances, and is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive:

John 21:24—"And we know that his testimony is true." The author differentiates himself (as is not always recognized) from the "beloved disciple" to imply a personal acquaintance with him and his testimony and to provide a firsthand assurance of the accuracy of his testimony.

1 Cor. 15:8—"As to one untimely born, he appeared also to me." Paul uses the first person to stress that he can attest to the reality of the physical resurrection of Jesus.

2 Cor. 12:2—"I know a person in Christ who, fourteen years ago, was snatched up to the third heaven." The "person" of course was probably Paul himself, and his account in the first person ("I know a person") provides authorization that in fact this is an event that really happened; in the context the narrative is used, in part, to establish Paul's credentials in the face of Corinthian opposition.

2 Peter 1:16–19—"We did not follow cleverly devised myths.… We heard this voice from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word made more sure." The author, falsely claiming to be Peter, uses a first-person-plural narrative to place himself with other apostles in the presence of Jesus at the crucial moment of the Transfiguration in order to validate his own message and to denigrate the message of his opponents (who were *not* eyewitnesses).

1 John 1:1–4—"What we have heard and seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled … and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life … what we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you so that you might have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ; and we are writing these things to you so that our joy might be made complete." The prologue to 1 John is narrated in first-person plural, and it specifically stresses that the author and unnamed others (implied: the other apostles) had a real, tactile experience of the Word of Life.[82] The physicality of the manifestation of the word—stressed in the Prologue—plays an enormous role in the rest of the account, in opposition to the secessionists who have denied that "Jesus Christ came in the flesh." By narrating it in the first-person plural, the writer validates his alternative version, on the basis of personal experience.

Gospel of Peter 26, 59–60—"But I and my companions were grieving and went into hiding, wounded in heart. For we were being sought out by them as if we were evildoers who wanted to burn the Temple. While these things were happening, we fasted and sat mourning and weeping, night and day, until the Sabbath.…" "But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and grieved; and each one returned to his home, grieving for what

had happened. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went off to the sea. And with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus."[83] Un-like the canonical Gospels, this one is written in the first person by Peter, an unimpeachable authority for the accounts narrated.

The (Greek) Apocalypse of Peter, passim—"When the Lord was seated on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him. And we besought him and entreated him.… 'Declare to us what are the signs of your coming and of the end of the world.… And our Lord said to us.… And I, Peter, answered and said to him.… And he showed me in his right hand the souls of all men." And so on. In the Akhmim fragment the realms are seen by Peter himself: "And I saw also another place opposite that one, very squalid; and it was a place of punishment.… And I saw the murders and those who were accomplices.…"[84] The first-person narrative authorizes the account: Peter himself was given the tour of heaven and hell by Jesus.

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, passim—"The Savior … said to me, Peter, blessed are those who belong to the Father.…" "When he said this, I saw him apparently being arrested by them. I said, "What do I see Lord?" The entire account is narrated in the first person to verify the accuracy of what is reported to be the teachings of Jesus and the true account of his crucifixion.[85]

The Apocryphon of John:—"One day when John the brother of James … went up to the temple,… a Pharisee named Arimanios came up to him and said to him, "Where is your teacher, whom you followed?": I said to him.… The Pharisee said to me.… When I John heard this … I was distressed within.… At the moment I was thinking about this, look the heavens opened, all creation under heaven lit up, and the world shook." The first-person narrative authorizes the vision that follows, and the mystical revelation that it entails of the origins of the pleroma and the world of humans.[86]

The Apocryphon of James, passim—"You have asked me to send you a secret book revealed to me and Peter by the master, and I could not turn you down. … Be careful not to communicate to many people this book, that the Savior did not want to communicate even to all of us, his twelve disciples."[87] The author can assure the reader of the truth claims of the book, available only to the chosen few.

Many others of the Nag Hammadi writings, for the same reasons.

Irenaeus, *To Florinus*, quoted by Eusebius in *H.E*. 5. 20—"When I was still a boy I saw you in Lower Asia in Polycarp's company. … I have a clearer recollection of events at that time than of recent happenings … so that I can describe the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and talked, his goings out and comings in, the character of his life, his personal appearance, his addresses to crowded congregations. I remember how he spoke of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord; how he repeated their words from memory; and how the things that he had heard them say about the Lord, his miracles and his teaching, things that he had heard direct from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, were proclaimed by Polycarp.…" Irenaeus can vouch for his firsthand knowledge of Polycarp, who had firsthand knowledge of the apostle John. Since Eusebius quotes this correspondence, he stands within a direct line of eyewitnesses back to the apostles of Jesus.

Protevangelium Jacobi, ch. 18—"But I, Joseph, was walking, and I was not walking. I looked up to the vault of the sky, and I saw it standing still, and into the air, and I saw that it was greatly disturbed, and the birds of the sky were at rest. I looked down to the earth and saw a bowl laid out for some workers who were reclining to eat."[88] The chapter was not found in the oldest version of the Protevangelium but was added by a later redactor; its move from the third-person narrative about Joseph to a firsthand account of how time stood still when the Son of God appeared serves to authenticate the miraculous event of the incarnation by an eyewitness.

Infancy Gospel of Thomas 1—"I, Thomas the Israelite, make this report to all of you, my brothers among the Gentiles, that you may know the magnificent childhood activities of our Lord Jesus Christ—all that he did after being born in our country."[89] In the epilogue found in the Latin version, an editor adds the claim, "I have written the things that I have seen … and behold, the entire house of Israel has seen … how many signs and miracles Jesus did.…" Both are editorial additions to the text, making them redactional forgeries. Both function to verify the accuracy of the reporting.

Pseudo-Matthew, prologue—"I, James, son of Joseph the carpenter, who have lived in the fear of God, have carefully recorded everything I have seen with my own eyes that occurred at the time of the birth of the holy

Mary and of the Savior."[90] The claim to be Jesus' half-brother allows the author to set forth his narrative as deriving from an eyewitness.

The Apostolic Constitutions 1.1 and passim—"The apostle and elders to all those who from among the gentiles have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.…" "When we went forth among the Gentiles to preach the word of life.…" "We the twelve assembled together at Jerusalem …" "I Philip make this constitution.… I Bartholomew make this constitution … I Thomas make this constitution.… I Matthew … make a constitution.…" "I James, the son of Alphaeus, make a constitution.…" These directions for church leaders and polity come straight from the apostles themselves.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp 9.15—"As he entered the stadium a voice came to Polycarp from heaven.… No one saw who had spoken, but those among our people who were there heard the voice." "And as the fire blazoned forth we beheld a marvel—we to whom it was granted to see, who have also been preserved to report the events to the others." At precisely the moments at which the reader may doubt the account—when, that is, a supernatural element is introduced—the author introduces a first-person voice to assure the reader of the accuracy of what is related.[91]

The Martyrdom of Ignatius, 7—"Now these things took place on the thirteenth day before the Kalends of January, that is, on the twentieth of December, Sun and Senecio being then the consuls of the Romans for the second time. Having ourselves been eye-witnesses of these things.… When, therefore, we had with great joy witnessed these things, and had compared our several visions together, we sang praise to God, the giver of all good things, and expressed our sense of the happiness of the holy [martyr]; and now we have made known to you both the day and the time [when these things happened]."[92] The accuracy of the report is guaranteed by having come from eyewitnesses.

The Martyrdom of Marian and James, 1—"I refer to Marian and James.… Both of these … were bound to me not only by our common sharing in the mystery of our faith but also by the fact that we lived together in a family spirit.… And it was not without reason that in their close intimacy they laid upon me the task which I am about to fulfill."[93] A close companion of the martyrs presents himself as a particularly reliable witness to their deaths. The first person recurs throughout the narration, although the narrator, for some reason, is, unlike his companions, not in danger.

In some of these scattered examples, the first-person narrative is in the singular, in others, the plural. In some instances it dominates from beginning to end (Coptic Apocalypse of Peter); in others the first person appears after an initial third-person narration (Protevangelium; Apocryphon of John); in yet others the first person disappears into a third-person narration (Infancy Thomas). In a number of cases the first person is not identified, but is anonymous (John 1; 21; 1 John 1; Martyrdom of Polycarp; Martyrdom of Marian and James). Whether these first-person narratives represent accurate claims (Irenaeus?) or not (Apocalypse of Peter) they all are unified in having one thing in common. They all function to authenticate the reports in which they are embedded.

We have already seen from Polybius the importance of eyewitness testimony in antiquity in general. This can be seen, as well, in the writings of Thucydides on the pagan side and Josephus on the Jewish, as Campbell has recently stressed. For Thucydides, for example, the movement to the first person "emphasizes the author/narrator's knowledge and authority."[94] Indeed, for all these authors, "The author/narrator frequently attempts to establish his trustworthiness by lifting up his personal involvement in or thorough research and critical assessment of the subject matter."[95]

Eyewitness testimony was certainly important for the early Christians as well. Consider the words of Theophilus of Antioch:

> Seeing that writers are fond of composing a multitude of books for vainglory,—some concerning gods, and wars and chronology, and some, too, concerning useless legends and other such labor in vain —on their account I also will not grudge the labour of compendiously setting forth to you, God helping me, the antiquity of our books … that you may not grudge the labor of reading it, but may recognise the folly of other authors. For it was fit that they who wrote should themselves have been eye-witnesses of those things concerning which they made assertions, or should accurately have ascertained them from those who had seen them; for they who write of things unascertained beat the air. (*ad Autolycum* 3, 1–2)[96]

It is interesting in this connection that Augustine's nemesis Faustus denied that the Gospel of Matthew was valid precisely because it did not contain an

eyewitness report of Jesus' life and ministry (August., *Contra Faust*. 17, 1).

The relevance of these parallels for understanding the we-passages of Acts should be obvious. Here too is an anonymous first-person narrator. Does this first-person narration function like the other examples we have cited, six of them from the New Testament, or not? Without accepting Wehnert's somewhat extravagant theory of these passages, it is easy to agree with his general assessment of the function of the first-person narratives:

> The narrated subject of a text … periodically becomes the narrating subject, takes the place of the author and in doing so vouches for the unconditional reliability of the depiction for the reader.… Who could narrate one's own story better and more precisely than the person directly affected by it?[97]

A similar view was earlier expressed by van Unnik, "He who could claim to have been present at a certain event, was a generally accepted source of true information … autopsia was a safeguard against fallacies and opened the way of the truth."[98] Or consider the concession of Wedderburn: "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the author wishes to suggest that he was present on the journeys described and that the first person plural signals this participation."[99]

Except that the author of Luke was *not* a personal companion of Paul who participated in his journeys. His claim to have been a companion is false. This, then, is a book making a false authorial claim. It is, in other words, a forgery.

The History of "Our" Reception

To take the matter a step further, it is important to notice how the we-passages function in Acts. They put the writer in connection with Paul on his journeys, making him an eyewitness and thus self-authorizer of the account. In light of the genre considerations discussed by Plümacher and Robbins, it makes considerable sense that the author has inserted these references into passages in which sea travel was involved. That was not a requirement of sea-travel narratives, as Praeder and others have shown; but

it was a common enough characteristic of them, and so the sea passages made a sensible location for the occasional insertion of a self-verifying but false self-reference. He could just as well have chosen other places, had he wanted.

In support of the thesis that the author created these first-person narratives in order to establish himself as a participant in the ministry of Paul, it is well worth observing how these passages—and the larger narrative of Acts within which they were embedded—were read in antiquity. Here there is no ambiguity about the evidence at all. The we-passages were everywhere taken to be clear and certain indications that the author was an eyewitness to the ministry of Paul and that his account, as a result, was well-informed and accurate. This "history of reception" as we will see, gives the lie to those scholars today who maintain that if an author wanted to portray himself as an eyewitness, he would have had to do a much better and thorough job of it. The job this author did was thorough enough as it was and his editorial work was fully effective. Because of these we-passages, from the earliest (known) readers of Acts down to our own day, it has simply been assumed that the account was produced by a companion of Paul and is, therefore, to be trusted.

Our earliest extensive references to the text[100] come in the writings of Irenaeus, who indicates that the author, "Luke was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, he himself clearly evinces." Irenaeus goes on to mention the we-passages, and then explicates the significance of having an eyewitness produce the accounts: "As Luke was present at all these occurrences, he carefully noted them down in writing, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness, because all these [particulars] proved both that he was senior to all those who now teach otherwise, and that he was not ignorant of the truth" (*Adv. Haer*. 3.14.1).[101]

At about the same time—assuming a late second century date for the text[102]—we have the words of the Muratorian Fragment: "The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief" (2–6). Later it indicates:

> The Acts of all the apostles were written in one book. For "most excellent Theophilus" Luke compiled the individual events that took place in his presence—as he plainly shows by omitting the martyrdom of Peter as well as the departure of Paul from the city [of Rome] when he journeyed to Spain. (34–39).[103]

It is worth noting that already by this time—the time of our earliest recorded "readers response" (180 CE or so?)—it is a "general belief" that Luke was the author of the book and that he was an eyewitness to the life of Paul.

Soon thereafter Clement of Alexandria dubs Luke the author of Acts (*Strom*. 5.12). Some few years later, Tertullian's views are interesting and worth noting: he downplays the importance of Luke as a person only because he needs to do so when attacking Marcion's use of Luke's Gospel, and only that Gospel:

> Now Luke was not an apostle but an apostolic man, not a master but a disciple, in any case less than his master, and assuredly even more of lesser account as being the follower of a later apostle, Paul, to be sure: so that even if Marcion had introduced his gospel under the name of Paul in person, that one single document would not be adequate for our faith, if destitute of the support of his predecessors. (*Adv. Marc*. 4.2.2)[104]

And so Tertullian grudgingly concedes that the author of Luke followed Paul—obviously because he cannot deny it, since that was the established tradition already.

So too in the so-called anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke (which has nothing obviously anti-Marcionite about it): "Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession a physician, the disciple of the apostles, and later a follower of Paul until his martyrdom.… Later the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles."[105] Eusebius too accepted the standard tradition (*H.E*. 3.4.1). Jerome expresses it even more strongly: Luke was Paul's companion "in all his journeying" (*Vir. ill*. 7).

The tradition—unthinkable without the clues provided by the we-passages—continues down to the present day, not just among lay readers of

the Bible but among noted scholars of the New Testament, from across a wide spectrum, including the likes of D. Bock, J. Fitzmyer, J. Jervell, C. K. Barrett, and C.-J. Thornton, just to pick several very different scholars from a host of possibilities. And so Barrett can declare about the we-passages: "The *prima facie* inference to be drawn from them is that the person who wrote them was present at the events he describes."[106] And as C.-J. Thornton states, somewhat rhetorically, "The We-passages of Acts do not contain anything that ancient readers would not have considered completely realistic. They could glimpse in them only a report concerning the actual experiences of the author. Had the author not participated in the journeys that are narrated in this we-format, his stories about these would be—from an ancient point of view as well—lies."[107]

It is possible now to draw some simple but far-reaching conclusions. By the end of the second century, everyone who ventures an opinion concerning the authorship of Acts indicates that it was written by Luke, a companion of Paul, who wrote about things that he himself observed. The "fact" that the author was a companion was shown by the we-passages. Since the author was an eyewitness, he was a reliable source for the accounts he narrated.

Since that is the case, there is absolutely nothing peculiar at all in thinking that the author edited his account precisely in order to achieve that end, that is, that this is the effect that he had in mind. Nothing more was needed—no additional first-person narratives, no further self-identification. All the author had to do in order to authorize his account as based on eyewitness testimony and therefore to make it trustworthy as historically accurate was to provide a few passages written in the first person, passages that are stylistically like all his other passages, and so do not appear to have come to him from a different source.

Objections to the View

It is sometimes argued that if "Luke" had really wanted to convince his readers that he was a companion of Paul and an eyewitness, he would have done much more to make it obvious: name himself in the preface, introduce more first-person narratives, stress that he really was present to see these things happen, and so on.[108] I have already shown why this argument

strikes me as unpersuasive. Starting with the first author to comment on the matter, Irenaeus in about 180 CE, and for the next eighteen hundred years, virtually every reader of the narrative of Acts was persuaded that it was written by an eyewitness, a companion of Paul. How could a ploy have been any *more* successful?

Others have argued that we have no analogy for what Luke allegedly did: introduce a first-person narrative without warning to authenticate the account.[109] That view is completely wrong, as we have already begun to see, but it is also important to recognize that Luke had no analogy for a number of his most important literary decisions. So far as we know, he had no predecessor in writing an account of the early church from a historical perspective, or in providing it with a first-person preface without hinting at his own identity, or in making it part of a two-volume work in which the two volumes are actually different genres of literature. To put it otherwise, Luke wrote a Gospel, which was a kind of religious biography, *and* a general history of the early church, and made them two volumes of the same work. Where is the analogy for that? So why does Luke need analogies for anything that he chose to do? In addition, it needs to be stressed that there are abundant analogies for the insertion of the first person into accounts in order to authorize their accuracy, as we saw above; in many instances, these eyewitness authorities are left anonymous, as they are in Acts, and yet they function to demonstrate the validity of the account.

Finally, it is sometimes argued that Luke was too obscure a figure in the early church for anyone to think of as the potential author of the account, if he were not really the author; anyone wanting fully to authorize the account would have chosen someone more prominent, like Timothy or Silas.[110] Unfortunately, this argument claims far more than we could possibly know. For one thing, when someone insists that Luke is too obscure a figure, we might ask, too obscure for whom? Our data from the first century of the church are frustratingly sparse. We have no way of knowing who was obscure or who was well known in most times and places. How can we possibly know who the local favorites among the early Christian missionaries were? In any event, this objection really has little to do with what the author was trying to achieve, since he never claims to be Luke but simply asserts that he was an occasional companion of Paul on his travels.[111]

The Purposes of the Forgery

We are left with the question of the purpose and function of the book of Acts—and indeed of Luke-Acts as a whole—an issue that luckily I do not need either to address or to resolve here in its broadest terms. There were undoubtedly multiple purposes for a work of this length and scope, and scholars have long debated the issues. More germane to my concerns here are the purpose and function specifically of Acts as a forgery. Here there is less room for dispute. The we-passages show that the author was (allegedly) a companion of Paul and therefore an eyewitness to his ministry. They provide assurance to the reader that the account is true and accurate.

Among other things, this is a "history" that celebrates Paul's miraculous conversion by a vision of Jesus himself, as recounted on three occasions in the narrative so as to highlight its importance. The book stresses Paul's divine commission to preach the gospel; it emphasizes his supernatural miracle-working power, his compelling preaching, the divine interventions that allow him to overcome all opposition and personal antagonism. Paul is portrayed as the one figure most responsible for the spread of the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (1:8), eventually in the capital city of Rome itself. Paul is the leading spokesperson in the church, God's chosen one to fulfill his mission on earth. The book in short, is both an encomium on Paul and an apology for his life, ministry, and message, allegedly written by someone who was there to see these things happen. But why would an apology be necessary?

We have already seen, and will see in greater length in the next chapter, that Paul was a controversial figure in the early church. So far as we can tell, he had at least as many enemies as friends. In most of his undisputed letters (Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians) he counters the views of his enemies and attacks their persons. These are enemies from *within* the Christian church, inimical teachers who take opposing points of view, and argue, in the context of their opposition, precisely against Paul, his message, and his authority for preaching it. And these are simply the enemies that we know about (though only allusively), from within his own churches. It is impossible for us to gauge how widely Paul was maligned by those in the churches founded by others, or for what reasons.

Acts answers many of the objections raised against Paul and his gospel message. It is not that the author of the book had access to the Pauline letters and writes a direct response to them; he never mentions Paul even writing letters to his churches, and if he did know Paul's writings, he did not know them well. Otherwise it is hard to explain why, in so many places, he appears to contradict them. The situation instead appears to be this: there were widely known charges leveled against Paul, some of them evidenced in his letters, and the author of Acts writes, in part, to set the record straight.

The Judaizers of Galatians claimed that Paul had no authority for his message and that he had corrupted the teachings of the apostles of Jerusalem, especially the pillars of the church, Peter, James, and John. Acts shows that in fact the authority for Paul's message came directly from the resurrected Jesus himself, and that his views were in complete harmony with the apostles before him, with whom he consulted immediately upon being converted and with whom he agreed on every major (and minor) point about both the gospel message and his mission to proclaim it.

The super-apostles of Corinth attacked Paul for being weak in speech and paltry in person. Acts shows that in fact he was a powerful and effective rhetorician, a great worker of miracles, and empowered by God in all his work. No human force could bring him down and his divinely appointed mission could not fail. If he is stoned in one place, he simply gets up and goes on to evangelize the next.

The opponents who maligned Paul to the Romans maintained that his gospel message discounted the role of Israel in the plan of God, severed God's relationship with the Jews, and led to a lawless and godless lifestyle. Acts shows on the contrary that Paul himself was a good, pious, faithful Jew from beginning to end, never doing anything opposed to the laws of his people, never urging lawless lifestyles, even among the gentiles; and Paul's mission was always "to the Jew first." It was unfaithful Jews who have rejected Paul; Paul never rejected Jews or the Jewish faith. His gospel was the fulfillment of all that is true in Judaism.

As we will see in the next chapter, eventually it was Paul's "lawless" gospel—which for him meant a gospel message that all people are restored to a right relationship with God apart from keeping the Jewish Law—that created the biggest rift between his followers and their Christian opponents, as there were other Christians for centuries to come who insisted that faith in Jesus was necessarily a Jewish faith, and that Paul had corrupted the truth

of the message of Jesus. For them, Paul was not a divinely commissioned spokesperson of God; he was, instead, the personal enemy of Peter, James, and other apostles of the church. Acts is an early attempt to rescue Paul from such charges, an account allegedly by a personal companion of Paul meant to set the record straight. Paul was converted directly by Jesus, he was empowered by the Spirit just as was Jesus himself and his disciples after him, he proclaimed the true gospel, and he was God's tool in fulfilling the divine plan—which is why he was both powerful and unstoppable. Most important for the purposes of internecine Christian polemic, Paul never did anything to violate the laws God had given to his people the Jews. Moreover, in all his views—about Jesus, the salvation he brought, the role of the Jewish Law, the standing of the gentiles among the people of God—he saw eye-to-eye with the other apostles, and in particular the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. He and they proclaimed the same message.

Even so, the message that they all proclaim in Acts is not, historically, the message of either the historical Paul or of the historical Peter and James. It is the message of "Luke," a later, anonymous author falsely claiming to have been a one-time companion of Paul.

1. "The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research," *JBL* 95 (1976): 243–54.

2. M. Eugene Boring, "First Peter in Recent Study," *WW* 24 (2004): 358.

3. "One might call this an imitation of Paul, without begrudging it the name." (Imitationem Pauli liceret dicere, sine inuidia nominis.) *Paraphrasis in Epistolam I. Petri*, praef. Abs. 3; quoted in Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier, *Handlungsmodelle im ersten Petrusbrief* (Würzburg: Echer Verlag, 1990), p. 31 n. 66.

4. H. H. Cludius, *Uransichten des Christenthums nebst Untersuchungen über einige Bücher des neuen Testaments* (Altona: Hermann Heimart, 1808), pp. 296–302.

5. "First Peter in Recent Study," p. 359.

6. Claus-Hunno Hunzinger, "Babylon als Deckname für Rom. und die Datierung des 1 Petrusbriefes," in Henning Graf Reventlow, ed., *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 67–77.

7. See the discussion of the Sibyllina on pp. 508–19.

8. "Das einhellige jüdische Belegmaterial zwingt zu dem Schluß, daß *die Bezeichnung Roms als Babylon unter dem Eindruck der erneuten Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels zustande gekommen ist*." P. 76, italics his. Neugebauer and Thiede have called Hunzinger's view into question; Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier shows why their objections are not convincing (*Handlungsmodelle*, pp. 127–28, n. 327).

9. The argument is most recently embraced by Lutz Doering, "Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering: Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 645–81, who also points out that since the claim to authorship is false, there is no reason to think the book was actually written from Rome, any more than that it had to be written to the churches of Asia Minor. It was instead written by a later Christian who "knows" that Peter was closely associated with the Roman church.

0. William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

1. Meir Bar-Ilan, "Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries CE," in *Essays in The Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society*, ed. Simcha Fishbane et al. (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992), vol. 2, 47.

2. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, p. 250.

3. Ibid. See also her earlier study, Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Among the other significant studies of ancient education in reading and writing, see esp. Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

4. P. 177.

5. P. 175.

6. Meir Bar-Ilan, "Illiteracy," pp. 46–61; Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

7. See the preceding note.

8. P. 426.

9. P. 91.

0. P. 243.

1. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993), p. 19.

2. Mark Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
3. Contrast the bizarre view set forth in the Louw/Nida, *Lexicon* *, 27.23, who reject the definition of "illiterate" for *agrammatos* in Acts 4:13: "this is highly unlikely in view of the almost universal literacy in NT times, and especially as the result of extensive synagogue schools." An understanding of ancient society and culture would go a long way in correcting this kind of mistake, even in such basic fields as lexicography.
4. James Strange in IDBSup., p. 140. Jonathan Reed estimates six hundred to fifteen hundred inhabitants in the time of Jesus (*Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000, p. 152). The wildly inaccurate claims of Bellarmino Bagatti ("Caphernaum" *MB* [1983] 9) that Capernaum was a city of two thousand to fifteen thousand inhabitants, "as urbanized and urbane as anywhere else in the empire," were based, as Jonathan Reed has pointed out, on the erroneous estimates of Eric Meyers and James Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), p. 58 (which Strange later modified as noted above), themselves based on the size of the town as described by Charles Wilson's report in 1871 [!] that the area of the ruins covered 30 hectares. In fact, the area is no more than 6 hectares, and is not as densely populated as Meyers and Strange originally thought (four hundred to five hundred persons per hectare).
5. Reed, *Archaeology*, p. 159.
6. The indication of Luke 7:1–10 that a centurion, with his century, was stationed in town is completely fictitious. Sometimes it is thought that since Zebedee had "hired servants" fishing must have been a relatively lucrative profession in Capernaum (Mark 1:16–20). But the reference is thoroughly literary. There is no reason to suspect that Mark ever visited the place on a tour of the holy land to note its affluence. Moreover, these "hired servants" may just as well have been very low-level peasants eking out a hand-to-mouth existence.
7. John H. Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," *ABD* V, 269–78.
8. *1 Peter: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 64.

9. Paul Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 3.
0. Prostmeier, *Handlungsmodelle*, pp. 1–32.
1. I am completely unpersuaded by Karl Matthias Schmidt, *Mahnung und Erinnerung im Maskenspiel: Epistolographie, Rhetorik und Narrativik der pseudepigraphen Petrusbriefe* (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), recapitulated in K. M. Schmidt, "Die Stimme des Apostels erheben: Pragmatische Leistungen der Autorenfiktion in den Petrusbriefen," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 625–44, that 1 Peter was meant to be a "fictional" letter. So far as we know it was never read that way, and there are no clear indications that the author meant for it to be taken that way—one of the major criteria for fictions over forgeries, in Schmidt's own reckoning. Decisive for Schmidt is 1 Peter 5:1, Παῦλος. which he reads as meaning not that Peter saw the passion, but that he had been martyred. And if he was martyred, he must not be writing this letter! But throughout the book of Acts, as we will see, Peter is repeatedly referred to as a διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν to Jesus, while still very much alive.
2. H.-M. Schenk and K. M. Fischer, *Einleitung in die Schriften des NT* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1978), vol. 1. 199–203.
3. *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 14–15.
4. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Leipzig: Weidmannischen, 1810), pp. 617–18.
5. "Das Verwandtschaftsverhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefs und Epheserbriefs," *ZWT* (1881): 379–80.
6. *The Primitive Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 136–39.
7. See pp. 218–22.
8. Most recently see Lutz Doering, "Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering: Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 645–81. In other Christian writings from about the same time it is clear that writing "through" someone meant that the person carried the letter. Thus, decisively, Ign. Rom. 10. 1, Phil. 11.2, Smyr 12.1, Polyc-Phil. 14.1, and even Acts 15:22–23—where again Silas/Silvanus is designated as the letter carrier. Did the author of 1 Peter know this tradition of Silas and reemploy

it here? Thus Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897–1904), 1. 459.

9. The claim sometimes made (e.g., Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," *ABD* 5. 273) that since the author appeals to Jewish Scripture his readers must have been, or included, Jews overlooks the fact that gentiles in the church also used Scripture and that numerous writings, even in the New Testament, are directed to gentiles but use sophisticated modes of interpreting the "Old" Testament (cf. 1 Corinthians).

0. When Elliott argues in *Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) that the language of "resident alien" is to be taken literally as a description of the recipients, not figuratively in the sense of life in this world, apart from one's heavenly home, he makes some interesting sociohistorical points. But it is hard to believe that the author imagined all of his readers literally to be resident aliens wherever they happened to dwell. Would the letter not be read in churches with a variety of social groups present?

1. John Mark is connected with Peter in Acts 12–13; Silvanus could conceivably be thought of as loosely connected with Peter because of Acts 15. But this is very weak, since there he is connected with all the apostles, including Paul. Moreover, it is important to recall, as will be argued at greater length below, Acts too is invested in making links between Peter and Paul, and does so in no small measure by claiming that they had the same associates.

2. The one exception is the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, which certainly postdates 1 Peter. See further the discussion on pp. 407–12.

3. "Man kann unbedingt behaupten, daß, wenn unserem 'Briefe'… das erste Wort *Petrus* fehlte, niemand auf die Vermutung, er sei von Petrus verfaßt, geraten sein würde." *Einleitung in das NT*, 7th ed. (Tübingen, 1931), pp. 192–93. I find Doering unpersuasive with regard to the point that the author is intent on painting a distinct portrayal of Peter ("Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering"). The allusions to Peter, if they exist at all outside of 1:1, are far too sparse and indeterminate.

4. Specifically, the views of Schwegler are not far off the mark: "[1 Peter is] the attempt of a Pauline author to mediate between the separate directions of Petrine and Pauline writers by putting into the mouth of Peter the witness to the orthodoxy of his fellow apostle Paul, a depiction, colored somewhat in a Petrine fashion, of the Pauline teaching.… We thus must recognize in

the undeniably apologetic tendencies of this letter a historical situation, a historical motive, not from the apostolic, but from the post-apostolic era …" ("[1 Peter ist] der Versuch eines Pauliners, die getrennten Richtungen der Petriner und Pauliner dadurch zu vermitteln, dass dem Petrus ein Rechtgläubigkeitszeugnis für seinen Mitapostel Paulus, eine etwas petrinisch gefärbte Darstellung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs in den Mund gelegt wird.… Wir haben also in der, nun einmal unleugbaren apologetischen Tendenz unseres Briefes eine historische Situation, ein historisches Motiv nicht der apostolischen, sondern der nachapostolischen Zeit zu erkennen") *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter* II, 24 (as quoted in Prostmeier, *Handlungsmodellen*, p. 27). The difference from the perspective I map out here will be clear. Unlike Baur, Schwegler, and others of their ilk, I do not propose a master plan that encompasses the entire sweep of early Christian history, including the sense that this entire history was divided between Paulinists and Petrines, the single greatest fault of the Tübingen Schule. On the contrary, I think the early Christian tradition was far more fragmented than the Baur thesis allows.

5. Goppelt, *Commentary*, 28–30; Achtemeier, *1 Peter* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 15–19; Elliott *1 Peter* Anchor Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 20–39. Jens Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des Ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).

6. Among older scholars who did not shy away from seeing the Pauline resonances of the book, see V. McNabb, "Date and Influence of the First Epistle of St. Peter," *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 45 (1935): 596–613; F. W. Lewis, "Note on the Date of the First Epistle of Peter," *The Expositor* 5, 10 (1899): 319–20; W. Trilling, "Zum Petrusamt in NT," *ThQ* 151 (1971): 123–26; K. Kertelge, *Gemeinde und Amt im NT* (München: Kösel, 1972), p. 138.

7. William Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

8. For this point to stand, it scarcely matters that Paul is not recorded in Acts or the surviving letters as visiting all these provinces. He was known as the missionary to Asia Minor.

9. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 233–38.

0. See, e.g., Mitton, "The Relationship Between 1 Peter and Ephesians"; Kazuhioto Shimada, "Is 1 Peter Dependent on Ephesians? A Critique of C.

L. Mitton," *AJBI* 17 (1991): 77–196; and K. Shimada; "Is 1 Peter Dependent on Romans?" *AJBI* 19 (1993): 87–137. These questions go all the way back to 1777 and J. D. Michaelis's claim that Peter had read Romans; so Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus?* p. 5. For a negative judgment, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, pp. 15–19.

1. "… aktualisiert für eine neue Situation paulinisches Erbe—und das im Namen des Petrus!" Schenk and Fischer, p. 202.
2. Lindemann, *Paulus*, p. 258.
3. *1 Peter*, p. 18.
4. As some examples: somewhat oddly, the formulation that Christ "suffered" ὑπὲρ/περὶ ὑμῶν in 2:21; 3:18 never occurs in Paul (although Paul does indicate that Christ "died" for us Rom. 5:8; and for our sins in 1 Cor. 15:3.). In fact, Paul never uses πάσχω in reference to Christ. Christ as an "ἐπίσκοπος" or "ποίμην" 2:25 is never found in Paul; for this author, however, Christ is the chief Shepherd, and the leaders are to shepherd his flock (5:2–4). Possibly most striking, Christians are to continue living life "in the flesh" (4:1–2), a view Paul would have found either puzzling or downright offensive.
5. Wolfgang Trilling, "Zum Petrusamt im Neuen Testament: Traditionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen anhand von Matthäus, 1 Petrus und Johannes," *TQ* 151 (1971): pp. 123, 126.
6. "Situation und Sprache der Minderheit im ersten Petrusbrief," *Kairós* n.f. 19 (1977): 1–13.
7. Brox is precisely wrong when he argues, elsewhere, that it is anachronistic to imagine different forms of Christian faith belonging to one apostle or another (Peter, Paul, etc.) and correspondingly that an apostolic name would be used by ancient Christians to guarantee apostolic content ("Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes," *BZ* 19, 1975, 78–96). By no means is this view purely modern, as seen both from the New Testament (cf. "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas," 1 Cor. 1:12; or the conflict in Galatia) and from later writings such as the Pseudo-Clementines, as we will see in the next chapter.
8. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1. 18–20.
9. Another consideration–which is not exclusive to the one just discussed—involves the question of whether there was something specifically in the

teaching of Paul on suffering that had created problems for the apostle that needed to be resolved by "Peter." We know that Paul's views of suffering did indeed create problems, for example, in the Thessalonian church, where he evidently taught that the miseries of this age were soon to end with the return of Jesus on the clouds of heaven. When that did not happen a good deal of anxiety arose in the community, as some of their members died in advance of Jesus' return. Had those who "were asleep" lost their reward? 1 Thessalonians is written, in part, to deal with that problem. As time dragged on, Paul's views may have continued to cause problems, as the imminent end to this world of hardship never appeared. 1 Peter may have been written, in part, to deal with that ongoing situation, to explain the reasons for suffering and to reassure readers that it is to be expected in this age, in part because Paul's views were being discredited. If so, then this could be Peter sounding like Paul precisely in order to provide Petrine support for a specific Pauline perspective. It is striking that Asia Minor is the region where Peter and Paul's conflict is best reported (Galatians) and where we first learn of Christians "suffering for the name" (Pliny's letter to Trajan).

0. See pp. 226–27.

1. As both Dale Martin and Joel Marcus have pointed out to me, in private communications. After the public confrontation Paul leaves Antioch and never mentions it as part of his mission field again. Moreover, had he won a resounding victory, he surely would have stressed the point with his readers.

2. William Sanger Campbell, *The "We" Passages in the Acts of the Apostles: The Narrator as Narrative Character* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Claus-Jürgen Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen*, WUNT 56 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Jürgen Wehnert, *Die Wir-Passagen der Apostelgeschichte: Ein lukanisches Stilmittel aus jüdischer Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

3. Samuel Byrskog, "History or Story in Acts—A Middle Way? The 'We' Passages, Historical Intertexture, and Oral History," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. 263.

4. P. 264 Byrskog makes the mistake, however, of assuming that the "we" passages contain information that the author received "from people who

had been involved"; p. 266. Unfortunately he provides no argument that the passages come from a source instead of from an authorial decision.

5. The classic study, which is still very much worth reading, is P. Vielhauer, "On the Paulinisms of Acts," in *Studies in Luke Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1966), pp. 33–50.

6. Among the many, many scholars who have taken some such line since the days of Dibelius, Barrett can be taken as representative: C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ICC, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), p. xxix.

7. Claus-Jürgen Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen*. Thornton firmly differentiates this view from the traditional "itinerary" hypothesis. On Thornton's case against forgery, see further note 107.

8. *Die Wir-Passagen der Apostelgeschichte*.

9. A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The 'We'-Passages in Acts: On the Horns of a Dilemma," *ZNW* 93 (2002): 78–98.

0. Thornton does claim that there are distinct features of the passages—more references to the "hosts" of the apostles and more precise designations of time, for example—but these could just as well be verisimilitudes required by the nature of the material. That is to say, they are standard fare among forged narratives. Stylistically the passages are not different from the rest of the narrative, showing authorial unity.

1. "'We' and 'I' Passages in Luke-Acts," *NTS* 3 (1957): 128–32.

2. Darryl Schmidt, "Syntactical Style in the 'We'-Sections of Acts: How Lukan is it?" *SBLSP* 28 (1989): 300–308.

3. Ample refutations of Wehnert's claims along these lines (involving the first-person intrusions in Ezra and Daniel) can be found in the reviews of Chris Matthews, *JBL* 110 (1991): 355–57; and Gerard Mussies in *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 6 (1993): 70–76.

4. E. Plümacher, "Wirklichkeitserfährung und Geschichtsschreibung bei Lukas: Erwägungen zu den Wir-Stücken der Apostelgeschichte," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 2–22; Vernon K. Robbins, "By Land and by Sea: The We-Passages and Ancient Sea Voyages," *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. C. H. Talbert (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1978), pp. 215–42.

5. "By Land and by Sea," p. 217.

6. See, for example, John Reumann, "The 'Itinerary' as a Form in Classical Literature and the Acts of the Apostles," in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J*, ed. M. P. Horgan and

P. J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 335–57; and Susan Marie Praeder, "The Problem of First Person Narration in Acts," *NovT* 29 (1987): 193–218.

7. Reumann, "The 'Itinerary,'" p. 357.
8. Praeder, "The Problem," p. 210.
9. Ibid., p. 212. It might be noted that whereas Praeder has shown the problem of the first-person narratives in Acts, and uncovered the weaknesses of the various solutions, she comes up with no compelling solution of her own.
0. *Histories of Polybius*, XII. 25g–h; translation of W. R. Paton, in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), vol. 4.
1. It should be noted that Polybius is referring to the need for historians to have the *kinds* of experience necessary for the *kinds* of things they describe (military battles, political intrigues, etc.). But the same applies to the author of Acts: Does he have any personal experience of the missionary field that allows him to talk about it? Even more, does he have the experience of accompanying this particular missionary in his work?
2. See further pp. 421–25.
3. Translation of Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 371–87.
4. Translation of J. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 593–612.
5. Translation of Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 487–97.
6. Ibid., pp. 107–32.
7. Ibid., pp. 23–30.
8. Translation Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 31–71.
9. Ibid., pp. 3–23.
0. Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 73–113.
1. See further pp. 493–502.
2. Translation of *ANF*, 1.129–31.
3. Translation of Herbert Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 194–213.
4. Campbell, *The 'We Passages,'* p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 43. Where I disagree with Campbell is in his claim that the author of Acts—or of any of these other books he deals with—is interested purely in literary, narratological matters, and not with establishing precisely the

historicity of his account. The prologue of Luke is clear evidence, in my judgment, that the author's interests are not purely literary.

6. Translation of Marcus Dods in *ANF*, vol. 2.

7. "Das erzählte Subjekt eines Textes … wird phasenweise zum erzählenden Subjekt, nimmt den Platz des Autors ein und verbürgt dadurch dem Leser die unbedingte Zuverlässigkeit der Darstellung.… Wer könnte die eigene Geschichte besser und genauer erzählen als der Betroffene selbst?" Wehnert, *Die Wir-Passagen*, pp. 182–83.

8. "Once More St. Luke's Prologue," in *Essays on the Gospel of Luke and Acts," Neot* 7 (1973): 14.

9. Wedderburn, "The We Passages," p. 85.

00. All possible allusions to Acts from early Christian writings (including those in the NT) up to Irenaeus can be found in C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 1.30–48.

01. Translation in Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *ANF*.

02. On the date of the Muratorian Fragment, see p. 91, n. 70.

03. Translation of Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 305–6.

04. Translation of Peter Holmes, *ANF*, 3.

05. For discussion (and this translation) see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 38–39. Metzger dates this prologue to the end of the fourth century, not to the second.

06. *Acts of the Apostles*, 2.xxvii.

07. "Die Wir-Erzählung der Apostelgeschichte enthalten nichts, was antike Leser nicht für völlig realistisch gehalten hätten. Sie konnten darin nur einen Bericht über die wirklichen Erlebnisse des Autors erblicken. Hätte der Autor die in Wir-Form geschilderten Reisen gar nicht mitgemacht, so wären seine Erzählungen darüber—auch nach antiken Verständnis—Lügen." Thornton, p. 141. Thornton places a lot of stock in the testimony of Irenaeus and argues that his testimony must reflect tradition from the early second century. Moreover, if the book of Acts was itself written in the reign of Titus or Domitian, then historical Luke and others like Timothy would have been alive, making it implausible, in his judgment, that someone would have ascribed it to Luke, unless he really wrote it. There is nothing persuasive in this argument. False ascriptions could indeed occur during an author's lifetime (it is not even an *in*scription). We have ample evidence of

actual forgeries in the alleged author's lifetime: witness Galen, Martial, and 2 Thessalonians. Moreover, there is no reason to think that the historical Luke would have been physically present in the sundry places where this narrative was circulated, to make certain that no one said it was his. And what evidence, actually, do we have about the historical Luke—for example, the date of his death? None at all.

08. Thus, among many others, Praeder, "The Problem of First-Person Narrative."

09. Thus Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen*.

10. The argument is forcefully advanced in ibid.

11. Thornton's argument that the author really was a companion of Paul fails to convince, in part because his objections to the notion that the author tried to mislead his readers about his identity fall flat. Among other things, he claims that (1) a pseudonymous book would not be written in the lifetime of the alleged author. Yet we know of flat-out forgeries contemporary with their alleged authors. (2) The author would have claimed to be an eyewitness in the preface of the work. But how do we know what an author would have done? And why should we tell him what he should have done? (3) First-person narratives were not used to establish the credibility of historical accounts. This is just wrong. (4) If he were a fictional author, he would have dedicated it to a better-known person, such as Seneca. Again, we have no reason for thinking that we know what an anonymous author would have done, and he clearly had other compelling reasons for dedicating the book to Theophilus.

CHAPTER TEN

Forgeries in Opposition to Paul and His Message

In the previous chapter I noted that the apostle Paul appears to have had as many enemies as friends. We have seen a good deal of what those who revered Paul had to say about him, both by producing forgeries in his name (as in the Deutero-Pauline epistles) and by pseudonymously supporting him and his message, however it was understood, either subtly (as in 1 Peter) or not so subtly (as in 2 Peter and Acts). In this chapter we turn to Paul's literary opponents, who attacked Paul's person and message in the guise of authorized, usually apostolic, writings. Here again, some of the writings, such as the Epistula Petri, which introduces the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, are transparent in their attack on the unnamed Paul; others are far subtler in their polemic, such as the New Testament book of Jude. And a number fall somewhere along the spectrum between these two.

In all cases it must be remembered that the polemic against Paul may not be opposition to the Paul as he has been reconstructed by modern scholars from the seven undisputed letters (the so-called real Paul). Ancient readers knew nothing about this modern consensus of an authentic Pauline corpus or the views that could result from applying historical-critical methods to it. They interpreted and attacked the Paul that had come down to them in writings (some of them forged) and in the oral tradition—skewed as he and his message may have been in these media.

We begin with the most discussed canonical instance of anti-Paulinism, the New Testament letter of James, asking whether it is in fact directed against Paul (real or imagined) and, of particular relevance to our present concerns, whether it can be considered a forgery.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The letter of James begins simply enough: "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, greetings" (1:1). A number of persons are named James in the New Testament, including the

father of Joseph (Jesus' "father," Matt. 1:16), the son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21 etc.), the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3 etc.), the father of Jude (Luke 6:16), and, most famously, the brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3 etc.). There is a compelling two-pronged argument that the author of this short letter intends his readers to understand that he is the best known James, Jesus' brother, the head of the church in Jerusalem. On one hand, the author does not further identify himself, to indicate which James he is, in a world where the name was exceedingly common. This must mean that he can assume—at least he thinks he can assume—that his readers will know "which" James he is. That would work if this were a letter written to his own close-knit community, for whom further identification would be unnecessary. But the letter is addressed instead—this is the second prong—to the twelve tribes of the dispersion. That is, it is going everywhere.

There have been protracted debates about the ostensible recipients of the letter. Obviously it is not being sent to the twelve Jewish tribes, since these no longer existed; and there is nothing to suggest that it was being sent to non-Christian Jews around the world, as its interests are Christian (even though Christ himself is mentioned only twice). More plausibly, then, the letter is being addressed to Jewish Christians scattered throughout the empire or, possibly, to Christians in general. Since there is nothing uniquely Jewish about the letter (nothing non-Jewish either), perhaps the final option is the best.

With respect to authorship, in any event, the point is that this is a letter intended to be read far and wide by someone who simply calls himself "James" without indicating which James he was; the recipients would have no way of knowing his identity unless they assume he is "that" James: the most famous one of all, the brother of Jesus in charge of the mother church in Jerusalem. It is worth noting in this connection that this particular James is often named in the New Testament without further qualifier (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 2:12).

There are other forgeries produced in the name of James from the early Christian centuries, including the Protevangelium Jacobi, which I will discuss in a later chapter, and three works discovered at Nag Hammadi: the Apocryphon of James and two separate Apocalypses of James. Later times saw the production of yet other forgeries in his name as well.[1] No one thinks James wrote any of these other works. Why should we think he wrote the one that came to be included in the New Testament? My view is

that it, like the others, is forged in his name. One leading reason for thinking so is that like his compatriot Peter, as discussed in the previous chapter, James could almost certainly not write.

The History of the Suspicions

Questions about the authorship of the letter are ancient. As is often noted, the book is not included among the writings of Scripture listed in the Muratorian Fragment. In this case it is impossible to know, however, whether the author actually rejected the book or simply was not familiar with it. Eusebius, on the other hand, deals with the matter directly, indicating that the letter, which was "the first of the epistles that are called catholic" was (sometimes? often?) regarded as forged (ὡς νοθεύεται) since "many of the ancients do not mention it." He, however, accepts the book as canonical since it was used "in most of the churches."

> Such is the story of James, to whom is attributed the first of the "general" epistles. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted [ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν], since few early writers refer to it, any more than to Jude's.… But the fact remains that these two, like the others, have been regularly used in very many churches. (*H.E.* 2.23.25)

Jerome says something similar: "[James] wrote a single epistle, which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles, and even this is claimed by some to have been published by someone else under his name, and gradually as time went on to have gained authority" (*Vir. ill*. 2).

Generally, of course, the book was accepted as canonical and attributed to James, the brother of Jesus. Even Luther, who denied that the book was "apostolic" because it "did not preach Christ," did not deny that James had written it. The first to question authorship seriously was Wilhelm de Wette in his widely used *Einleitung* of 1826; but it was F. H. Kern who first pushed hard for pseudepi-graphic authorship, in 1835.[2]

Arguments for Forgery

There are solid reasons for thinking that whoever wrote this letter, it was not James, the brother of Jesus. The first, as already mentioned, is that James of Nazareth could almost certainly not write.

Whoever produced this letter was a highly literate native speaker of Greek, grounded in Hellenistic modes of discourse and able to use abundant rhetorical devices and flourishes. It is often noted that the book employs sophisticated use of participles, infinitives, and subordinate clauses. Even Luke T. Johnson, a supporter of authenticity, points out that the language consists of "a form of clear and correct *koine* with some ambitions toward rhetorical flourish … comparable in quality if less complex in texture, to that of Hebrews."[3] Johnson also notes that the author makes vigorous use of rhetorical devices found in many Greco-Roman moral discourses, but associated especially with the diatribe.[4] Matt Jackson-McCabe concurs: not only does the author evidence a "relatively high proficiency in Greek grammar, vocabulary, and style"; he is "more generally at home in literate, Hellenistic culture," using commonplaces of Greco-Roman moralistic literature (horses with bits, ships and rudders, controlling the tongue in order to control the body, etc.).[5]

It seems unlikely that an Aramaic-speaking peasant from rural Galilee wrote this. Here I can simply refer the reader back to the discussion of literacy in antiquity, and in Palestine in particular, in the preceding chapter.[6] What applied to the fisherman Peter applies to the common laborer James as well (an apprentice carpenter? We don't know how he earned a living), or even more so. As far into the backwoods as Capernaum was, the little hamlet of Nazareth was more so; excavations have turned up no public buildings, let alone signs of literacy. Even if James's well-known brother could read—and so was considered highly exceptional by his townsfolk (Luke 4:16; cf. Mark 6:2)—it would have been Hebrew; nothing suggests that Jesus could write; if he could do so it would have been in Hebrew or Aramaic, not Greek. And by all counts he was the star of the family.

This was a part of the world where literacy was likely 1–2 percent or even less. Where would James have learned to write Hebrew? Or to read Greek? To write Greek? To write literary Greek? Greek that shows knowledge of the diatribe? And that uses rhetorical flourishes known from Greco-Roman moralists? All of that would have taken many years of intensive education, and there is precisely zero indication that James, the

son of a local τέκτων, would have had the leisure or money for an education as a youth. Moreover, there were no adult education classes to make up the deficit after his brother's death years later. One should not reason that James could have picked up Greek after Jesus' death on some of his travels. If he did learn any Greek, it would have been of a fumbling kind for simple conversation; writing literacy was not (and is not) acquired by sporadic conversations in a second language—especially writing literacy at this level. And James certainly would not have mastered the Scriptures in Greek, as the author of this letter has done (see 2:8–11, 23; 4:6). And so, despite the remarkably sanguine claims of some scholars about the Greek-writing skills of uneducated rural peasants of Nazareth, it is virtually impossible to imagine this book coming from the pen of James.[7] The conclusion of Matthias Konradt is understated at best: "it remains questionable … whether one might expect the rhetorical and linguistic niveau of James from a Galilean craftsman's son."[8] More apt is the statement of Wilhelm Pratscher: "Even if one assumes a widespread dissemination of Greek in first century C.E. Palestine, one will nevertheless scarcely consider possible the composition of James by the brother of the Lord, especially when one compares it to the markedly simpler Greek of the Diaspora-Jew Paul."[9]

Other arguments support the claim that James the brother of Jesus almost certainly did not write the letter.[10] Of key importance is the fact that precisely what we know about James of Jerusalem otherwise is what we do not find in this letter. The earliest accounts of James—one of them from a contemporary—indicate that he was especially known as an advocate for the view that Jewish followers of Jesus should maintain their Jewish identity by following the Jewish Law. This seems to be the clear indication of Gal. 2:12 in the famous Antioch incident: "Certain men from James" influenced Cephas no longer to eat with the gentiles, out of "fear of those from the circumcision." The most sensible construction of the incident is that these "men" were representatives of James's perspective, that he was a leader of the so-called circumcision party, and that this group of Christians, with him at the head, insisted on the ongoing importance of Jews maintaining their Jewish identity, which meant, in light of concerns stemming from rules of kashrut, not eating with gentiles.

So too, the book of Acts. Despite its concern for the gentile mission and its insistence that gentiles not convert to Judaism to be followers of Jesus,

Acts portrays James as a Jew deeply concerned that Jewish followers of Jesus maintain their Jewishness. Nowhere is this more evident than in the incident in Acts 21:18–24, where James, after agreeing with Paul about gentiles, nonetheless wants Paul, as a Jew, to demonstrate to other Jews that he has not at all abandoned his own commitment to keeping the Law. The incident is obviously to be suspected historically, as an invention of "Luke." But even as such, it confirms the traditional view that James, a Jewish follower of Jesus, was known to be intent not to violate anything in the rituals prescribed in the Jewish Law.

So too in the fragmentary report of book 5 of Hegesippus' now lost *Memoirs*, quoted by Eusebius (*H.E*. 2.23), possibly dating to the early second century. Here James is said to have remained a Nazirite his entire life, to have had special access to the Jewish Temple, and to have prayed there so regularly that his knees became as calloused as a camel's. Moreover, according to this account, James's concern was entirely for the Jewish people, many of whom he converted to the consternation of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, leading to his martyrdom by the sanctuary. Hegesippus indicates that this happened immediately before the siege of Jerusalem; Eusebius claims that it is what led (theologically) to the destruction of Jerusalem.

What all of these early accounts suggest about James of Jerusalem is that he was known to be particularly invested in seeing that Jewish followers of Jesus maintained their distinctiveness, vis-à-vis the rest of the world, by holding fast to their Jewish identity culturally and cultically.

The book of James hints at a James-like audience, as it is addressed to "the twelve tribes." What is striking is that none of the cultural or cultic concerns of James of Jerusalem is in evidence in the book. Just the opposite. The book is thoroughly concerned about the "Law," but not about the aspects of the Law that James himself is reported to have been invested in. Here, in the book of James, the Law more or less involves the love commandment (2:8) and the Decalogue (2:10–12). There is nothing about ritual. Or cult. Or kosher food laws. Or Sabbath or feast days. Or circumcision. Or anything at all involving Jewish ethnic identity. The Law is a moral code given by God, applicable to all people. In other words, just those aspects of Law otherwise attested as of supreme interest to James of Jerusalem are absent here. It cannot be replied that this is to be expected in

a letter written principally to gentiles; the address indicates that the intended audience is Jewish (-Christian).

One can go farther and argue that what is emphasized in this letter runs precisely counter to what we would expect from the pen of James, leader of the "circumcision party." As we will explore more fully in a moment, this author is concerned not with the "works of the Law" in the sense used by Paul in opposition to "those of the circumcision"—that is, the aspects of the Law that established Jewish identity in a pagan world. The concern is with "good works," that is, doing good deeds to benefit other people. There is no reason to think that the historical James would have objected to the notion that good deeds were an important aspect of the life of one following Jesus. But it is not the area of Law that he is otherwise identified with. His own interests were the same as Paul's, even if he took a position contrary to the apostle of the gentiles on those issues. He was interested in "works of the Law," not "good deeds."

In this connection it is interesting to notice which sins and failures occupy the author of the letter. They are by and large not explicit violations of the Torah but moral shortcomings such as showing favoritism, not controlling one's speech, and failing to help those in need. So too, what is "true religion" for this author? It has little to do with specific requirements of the Torah per se. It involves "bridling" the tongue and "visiting orphans and widows in their affliction" (1:26–27). It also involves "keeping unstained from the world," which would seem to open up the door for a discussion of cultural separatism. But instead of detailing the importance of maintaining Jewish identity in light of "the world's" staining influence, the author speaks only of upright moral behavior. Again, this is not an "un-Jewish" concern; it simply is not the concern attested otherwise for James of Jerusalem. This author speaks of "fulfilling the entire Law" but says not a word about Sabbath, circumcision, purification laws, kashrut, or festivals.[11]

Further indications that the letter is not written by James are given by the intimations that it was written at a relatively late date within the development of early Christianity, after James had died, presumably sometime in the 60s. For one thing, the debate over whether it was important for Christians to engage in "good works" is itself evidenced in the post-Pauline period. In Paul's day, and James's, the pressing issues had to do with the relationship of believers in Jesus to the "works of the Law."

Only later, as we will see more fully below, did that concern migrate into a conflict over the importance, or irrelevance, of doing good deeds for salvation.

Another indication of a late date is the concern over ostentatious wealth in the community. Wealthy people have come into the congregations and caused problems, both by their very presence (the problem of favoritism, 2:1–5) and by their actions (dragging the poor into court, 2:6). That rich members of the community formed a sizable minority is evident from the charge of 5:1–6. And how early in the history of the Christian communities could this have been a problem? Surely not in the first decades. So too we learn that even though the "coming of the Lord is at hand" (5:8–9), people need to exercise the patience of Job in waiting for it. This seems to indicate that a good deal of time has passed in the expectation of the parousia, so much so that people have grown highly impatient and need proverbial patience in order to quell their anxieties. Consonant with these considerations is the fact that "elders" appear to be in charge of the community (5:14), a development that appears closer to what we find, say, in the Pastoral epistles than in the letters of Paul written during James's lifetime.[12]

These indications of late date (and the Hellenized language) not only show that the letter was not written by James, but also that it was not commissioned by him in his lifetime—a view that is rendered highly improbable on other grounds as well, as discussed earlier when I considered the widespread but faulty view among scholars that early Christian authors employed others to write their works for them.[13] This book, in short, claims to be written by someone who did not write it. It is our earliest extant work produced in the name of James, brother of Jesus, and head of the church in Jerusalem. But like its later counterparts, it too is forged in his name. Why then was it forged?

James as a Counterforgery

Luke Johnson has made a strong case that there is no hard evidence of real animosity between the historical James and the historical Paul, basing his argument in large measure on Paul's neutral references to James in 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19, 2:9, 2.12; and possibly 1 Cor. 9:5.[14] This reading may falter

on the Antioch incident of Gal. 2:11–14, as already mentioned. If "James" is not to be blamed for the highly controversial stance of Cephas—who acted "out of fear for the circumcision party"—why would Paul bother to specify that it was the representatives of James who created the problem in the first place? Paul's stance, in any event, is clear: these "men from James" represented a completely intolerable view that threatened the essence of his gospel message. Would James have agreed? We have no way, ultimately, of knowing. What we do know is that later traditions portrayed James and Paul at loggerheads. This can be seen, for example, in the graphic account of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*, where Paul is said to have tried to murder James for his missionary success among Jews in Jerusalem (a passage we will consider at greater length later in this chapter[15]) and by implication in the Epistula Petri, where James is the recipient (eager and willing, one might infer) of the letter of Peter in which Paul, though not named, is clearly described as "the man who is my enemy." The tradition appears to have lived on in some Christian groups who swore allegiance to Jerusalem and the church started there, ruled by James, such as the Ebionites, who understood Paul as Christian enemy number one.

Despite occasional disclaimers, there should be no doubt that Paul, or at least the tradition associated with Paul, is under attack in the letter attributed to James in the New Testament. Johnson is absolutely right to object that there is more to the book than 2:14–26; but it is also the case that this passage is where the principal polemic lies. Moreover, the themes of these thirteen verses resound throughout the short letter. The book is about nothing if not "doing good works" and so being a "doer of the word" instead of simply a hearer. It is overwhelmingly concerned with followers of Jesus living out their faith. All the paranesis is directed to that end, and the book is almost completely paranesis.

Moreover, Johnson is wrong to argue that "there is absolutely no reason to read this section [i.e., 2:14–26] as particularly responsive to Paul."[16] Much to be preferred, for clear and compelling reasons I will enumerate, is Kari Syreeni: "Not only does [James] heavily draw on Paul, it goes very decidedly into a debate with well-known Pauline statements. The reluctance of many scholars to see a literary dependence here is stunning."[17] Stunning indeed, but understandable. Who wants two of the leading authorities of early Christianity to stand at loggerheads? But at loggerheads they stand—at least in the opinion of the author of this letter, who put words on the pen

of James in order to attack what he understood to be the views of Paul. What I will be arguing—here I stand at some variance with Syreeni—is that even though the author based his argument against Paul on "authentic" Pauline traditions, he read these traditions through the lens provided by later Pauline interpreters, so that what he attacked was not (the "real") Paul but a kind of Deutero-Paul, one evidenced, in fact, in surviving Pauline forgeries. The book of James, in other words, is a counterforgery.

James as Dependent on Paul

The evidence that James depends on Pauline formulations for its polemic is clear and compelling; it hinges on verbatim agreements, conceptual formulations, and polemical constructions that are simply too closely aligned to be discounted.

James 2:21 and Rom. 4:2 (and Gal. 3:7)

> James 2:21: Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη.
> Rom. 4:2: εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη.

The precise verbal overlap alone would be significant, but it is important as well to recognize that for James, both the concept of justification and the example of Abraham appear completely out of the blue in 2:21. "Being justified" has not been part of the discourse of faith and works until this point: δικαιόω occurs here for the first time in the letter. This shows that James is responding to someone who made justification—and more specifically, Abraham's justification—the key point in a discussion of faith and works. This point is made nowhere in early Christian literature, outside of Paul and James.

Moreover, both James 2:23 and Rom. 4:3 quote Gen. 15:6 in order to establish their (contrary) views about Abraham in relationship to his justification. Again, nowhere else in early Christian (or Jewish) literature is Gen. 15:6 brought to bear on the question of justification, let alone justification by works or by faith.

In addition, it is worth noting that the author of James 2:21 understands that Christian believers are the children of Abraham ("Abraham our father"), the one who was justified "by works." This stands in stark contrast

with Gal. 3:7: “those who are from faith, these are the children of Abraham.”

James 2:24 and Gal. 2:16 and Rom. 3:28

> James 2:24: ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον.
> Gal. 2:16: εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
> Rom. 3:28: λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.

The parallels among the passages, much noted for centuries, are striking still today: all of them contain a verb of knowing, an indefinite “person,” the verb “justified” in the passive voice, and the antithetical contrast of works and faith. Nowhere else in all of early Christian literature are these elements combined. Yet the two authors take what appear to be—at least on the surface—opposite sides of the argument, one insisting that a person is justified not by “works” of the Law but by faith, the other that a person is not justified by faith alone but by “works.” The passages are far too close to have been accidentally created in such similar yet contrary fashion. And so, as Lindemann, in the company of many others, has noted: “The section James 2:21–24 in any case touches so closely upon Romans 3–4 that it raises suspicions of a literary relationship.”[18]

The difficulty with Lindemann’s claim, which echoes the views widely held at least since Luther, is that it imagines only two possible alternatives: literary independence (of James and Paul) or literary dependence. As I will argue below, this overlooks other options, especially “secondary orality,” where Paul’s writings influenced how people, even illiterate followers, may have discussed (and here and there altered) his views. This would be a kind of literary dependence mediated not through manuscripts but through an oral tradition, and would make sense of the fact, noted by many, that technically speaking James does not contradict Paul, since his construal of the key terms of the debate—“faith” and “works”—differs from Paul’s. That does not mean there is not dependence. Given all the linguistic and conceptual parallels, some kind of dependence is necessary. But it may mean that James is not simply “misreading” Paul. He may have inherited these Pauline formulations in some way other than a direct literary connection with copies of Romans and Galatians in hand.

Other Indications of Dependence

Before developing that idea, it is important to note several other indications that James is reacting to or otherwise influenced by Pauline formulations, whether he learned of these in writing or by other means. Thus for example, James' reference to νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας (1:25; cf. 2:12) seems to stand in sharp contrast to Paul, for whom the Law is a matter of slavery (Gal. 4:24; 5:1) and brings a curse (Gal. 3:10). In addition, as Popkes has pointed out, the only places in early Christian writings where the love command of Lev. 19:18 is portrayed as the crown of the Law, but not used as part of the "two greatest commandments," are James 2:8–11, Rom. 13:8–10, and Gal. 5:14. Popkes convincingly argues for other connections with Paul,[19] leading him to conclude: "James does not treat an isolated theological motive (in 2:14–16) but writes from the background of the development of (Pauline) missionary churches. It is even possible that he may have gained access to several Pauline key texts, albeit probably not directly but mediated through oral or written communication."[20] Note the final phrase.

Understanding the polemic of James requires one to place him in relation to the tradition he is opposing. That is the problem with the position taken by scholars such as N. W. Niebuhr, who argues that one should read James on "its own terms" without importing a knowledge of Paul. Margaret Mitchell's response is apt: in order to read James on its own terms, one *must* read it in light of Paul, "if Paul was one of those terms!"[21]

James as Independent of Paul

Even though James has picked up phrasing, concepts, contrasts, and Scriptural proofs from Paul, his actual position, as often noted, may not be contradictory to Paul's. True, he certainly sounds contrary to Paul. For James a person is justified by works, not by faith alone; for Paul a person is justified by faith, not by doing the works of the Law. The problem is that Paul and James appear to mean different things by both "faith" and "works."

I do not need to provide a lengthy disquisition on Paul's use of the two words. Faith, for Paul, refers to a trusting relationship with God through Christ, or a trust in Christ's death for justification. It is a relational term. But

not for James. When James speaks of "faith" he refers to an intellectual acknowledgment of theological claims: "You believe that God is one? You do well. Even the demons believe, and they shudder" (2:19). For James, the intellectual assent to what we might call propositional truths cannot put a person into a right standing before God. One needs to do "works."

But what he means by "works" also differs from Paul. Paul's "works of the Law" are the demands that the Law makes on Jews qua Jews. In Paul's view, justification does not come by keeping these demands. If it did, then there would have been no reason for Christ to die. This does not mean, of course, that Paul thought that "doing good deeds" was unrelated to a right standing before God. Much of his surviving correspondence, after all, involves urgent paranesis. Believers are still to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). But there is nonetheless an important terminological difference from James. For James, "works" are not the demands of the Law placed on Jews. They are good deeds. One needs to do good deeds in order to be justified. And so, the terse summary of Pratscher: "Indeed, Paul in no way represents the understanding of faith that James attacks."[22] For Paul, too, there is no such thing as ("true") faith without obedience (Rom. 1:5) or active love (Gal. 5:6).

One can well argue—and for centuries, competent scholars have done so, with some vehemence—whether the real, historical Paul would have disagreed with the views set forth by the author of James. My guess is that the answer is yes, since for Paul justification does not come by doing good deeds (either instead of or in addition to faith) but by faith in Christ. But the question is of no moment for my present discussion. One might also ask whether the author of James would have disagreed with the conception of justification put forth by the real, historical Paul. My guess here is that the answer is no, once the terms of the debate were clearly laid out. But again, it is beside the point for the present discussion. The point here is that the author of James is clearly dependent on Pauline formulations for his contrasting views, whether he understood Paul rightly or not, and yet he attacks these formulations in terms that are not actually commensurate with Paul's conception of them. Why is that?

One obvious solution, and the one most frequently suggested, is that James simply misread Paul. This is always a possibility, but another one presents itself as well. What is most interesting is that the Pauline notion that "works of the Law" cannot justify was eventually transformed

precisely in the Pauline tradition itself into a teaching about "good deeds." We have seen this already in both Eph. 2:1–10 and Tit. 3:5–8. In these instances, later Paulinists took Paul's teaching about the Jewish Law, and either unwittingly or knowingly altered it—or at least extended it—into a teaching about engaging in meritorious action. For the forger of Ephesians, for example; it is not doing good deeds that brings salvation; it is grace alone (2:1–10).

James is not attacking the position of Paul himself, as scholars have reconstructed him today on the basis of the undisputed letters.[23] But he does seem to be attacking a position that could be read out of the Deutero-Pauline epistles. Or to put it differently, the author of James is reading Paul —either the Pauline letters themselves (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:28, 4:2), or Pauline traditions circulating orally, based on those letters—through the lens provided by later Paulinists, as evidenced in the Deutero-Pauline letters. If he actually had access to literary forms of the later Pauline tradition, for example, the letter of Ephesians itself, then his writing is not just a forgery. It is a counterforgery.

Why James?

Why then did this counterforger choose the name James for his attack on a later Pauline position on faith and works? Dibelius saw the choice of the pseudonym as ideologically innocent.[24] Unlike the Deutero-Pauline letters, which invest considerable effort in convincing their readers that it is indeed Paul who is writing, this author simply states his name in 1:1 and provides no attempt at verisimilitude. Since James of Jerusalem was known for his "righteous" living, and since this book wants to stress the importance of living out one's faith, the connection was obvious. This view, however, overlooks the early traditions of conflicts between the historical James and the historical Paul. It can scarcely be an accident that this anti-Pauline letter is put on the pen of one of his best known early opponents.

Other more recent authors have gone too far in other directions. Most recently David Nienhuis, for example, advances the creative argument that the author of the book of James was the same person who compiled the seven-letter corpus of the Catholic epistles in order to complement the seven-letter canon of Pauline writings then in circulation, these others

produced by the "pillars" of the Jerusalem church.[25] This happened, according to Nienhuis, at the end of the second century, as there is no knowledge of the book of James before Origen. The author in particular was interested in countering the growing influence of Marcionism on the church, and its rabid Paulinism. There are enormous problems with this reconstruction. Irenaeus already shows evidence of knowing the book of James, for example,[26] and little in the writing could be seen as directed against distinctively Marcionite teachings.[27] On the contrary, the views the book counters are easily situated in the post-Pauline situation of the church at the end of the first century. Of more importance for the present discussion, Jude was not one of the "pillars" of the Jerusalem church. The collection could scarcely have been made in order to have writings of the "pillars" set in opposition to Paul. As a corollary, the author of the present epistle did not choose the name James for that reason.

At the end of the day, the simplest explanation of the authorial claim is probably the best. James was considered an impeccable authority in the early church as the "brother of the Lord" and the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Moreover, he was known to be an opponent of Paul, whether or not the tradition is rooted in a historical conflict. And so, an author who wanted to attack a "Pauline" position—possibly not knowing that it was not Paul's own, but a position that had later developed within some Pauline communities—chose his pseudonym wisely. In the letter of James we have a forger attacking a Deutero-Paul for views that Paul himself, so far as we know, never held. In doing so it stands in sharp contrast with pro-Pauline works that we have already considered. These include such works as the book of Acts, which shows Paul and James completely on the same page—theologically, practically, and every other way—and, interestingly, the book of 1 Peter, with which, as M. Konradt in particular has shown, the book of James has a number of striking similarities, even though their stand on Paul was precisely at odds.[28]

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

Jude is the shortest forgery of the New Testament, and like many of the others, it is filled with invective against its opponents, even if scholars have found it difficult to discern what, exactly, these enemies of truth were thought to have proclaimed.

Jude the Brother of James

An initial question to be addressed concerns the book's authorial claim. There are a number of persons named Jude/Judas in the New Testament : Judas Iscariot (Mark 3:19 and parallels; twenty-two occurrences altogether), Judas the son of James (the apostle, Luke 6:16), who may also be Judas "not Iscariot" of John 14:22, Judas the Galilean in Acts 5:37, Judas who owns a house in Acts 9:11, Judas who is called Barsabbas in Acts 15:22. There are solid reasons for thinking that the author of this letter is claiming to be one specific and arguably the best-known Jude of the early church, the brother of Jesus mentioned in Mark 6:3 (along with James, Joses, and Simon). The author identifies himself as the "brother of James" in v. 1, and Mark 6:3 provides us with the only James-Jude brother relationship in the New Testament. Moreover, one would normally identify oneself in relationship to one's father, not one's brother. The brother in this case must be an unusually well-known person to serve as an identity marker for the author—in this case, a well-known Christian. By far the best known James of the early church, of course, was James the brother of Jesus, head of the church in Jerusalem. The author of this short text, therefore, is almost certainly claiming to be a brother of both James and Jesus (cf. Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55).

In a moment we will see why the author may have wanted to identify himself in relation to James rather than Jesus. Some scholars have objected that Jude was too obscure a name for an author to choose as a pseudonym.[29] The objection has more rhetorical than substantive force, however. On one hand, how many "nonobscure" figures were there to choose from in the early church? The objection seems to assume that everyone writing pseudepigraphically would choose the names Peter or Paul. On the other hand, and more pressing still, how could Jude be thought of as obscure (leaving Hardy out of the equation)? He was widely known as extraordinarily well connected: his one brother was "the" leader of the earliest Christian community; his other brother was the Savior of the World. Not bad credentials for an early Christian author.

More than that, as J. Frey and others have shown, the author is claiming not just to be a brother of James (and thus a brother of Jesus) but also to be closely connected to the letter written by this brother, the New Testament book of James. The connection to this earlier letter is suggested already by

the author's use of the same identifying formula, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος.. Moreover, J. Daryl Charles has noted the inordinately large number of verbal parallels between the two books: 93 cases of verbal agreement out of 227 different words used, 27 of these terms occurring two or more times in both letters: "Astonishingly, *each* of the twenty-five verses of Jude averages approximately four words found in the epistle of James—an extraordinary rate of verbal correspondence." His conclusion: "Aside from Jude–2 Peter and Colossians-Ephesians comparisons, the verbal correspondence in James and Jude, considering the brevity of the latter, is unmatched anywhere else in the New Testament."[30] The writer of the letter of Jude, then, is claiming a derived authority; as Vögtle has put it, Jude's reference to his literary predecessor gives him a status as "einen zweiten Jakobus."[31]

Jude as a Forgery

Jude was rejected by some proto-orthodox and orthodox writers. Eusebius indicates that like the book of James, it was thought by some to be forged (ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν), although it was publically read in many churches and thus, possibly, canonical:

> Such is the story of James, to whom is attributed the first of the "general" epistles. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted [ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν], since few early writers refer to it, any more than to Jude's, which is also one of the seven called general (λεγομένων καθολικῶν). But the fact remains that these two, like the others, have been regularly used in very many churches. (*H.E.* 2.23.25)

Jerome voiced a more specific doubt about the book: since it quotes from 1 Enoch, it was regarded by many as non-Scriptural and rejected:

> Jude the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch it is rejected by many (a plerisque reicitur). Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures. (*Vir. ill*. 4)

Modern times have seen a healthy split among scholars who see the book as authentically written by the brother of Jesus and of James, and those who consider it forged.[32] Numerous factors give the palm to the latter group. For one thing, the book gives every indication of being produced relatively late in the first century, after the "age of the apostles." The apostles themselves are referred to as living in the past, and as predicting the "last time" when the author is now living—differentiated from the time of the apostles themselves (vv. 17–18). The author speaks of "the faith" as the content of the body of knowledge that makes up the Christian religion, a usage found in the Pastorals but not in earlier Christian writings such as those of Paul, despite occasional scholarly claims to the contrary.[33] That this "faith" was "delivered once and for all to the saints" assumes an event that transpired in the now distant past.

More important for our purpose here, there are highly convincing reasons for thinking that whoever wrote this letter, it was not Jude, the Aramaic-speaking peasant from Nazareth.[34] Here again, as with the book of James, we need to deal with the problem of language. This author too is not just writing-literate; he writes very good Greek, not the sort of skill one can acquire simply by spending time on the mission field without years of serious literary training.[35] As R. Bauckham points out, the book employs "wide and effectively used vocabulary"; some of its terminology is "rather specialized" (σπιλάς, φθινοπωρινός, πλανήτης); other words are relatively rare (ἀποδιορίζειν, ἐπαφρίζειν). The author has "command of good Greek idiom," his "sentence construction is handled with considerable rhetorical effect." Bauckham goes on to speak of the author's "almost poetic economy of words, scriptural allusions, catchword connections, and the use of climax."[36] In the fullest study of Jude's style, J. Daryl Charles speaks of the author's "elevated use … of rhetorical invention, composition, and style," and mentions, in particular, his use of "parallelism, antithesis, figures of speech, repetition, ornamentation, vivid symbolism, word- and sound-play."[37]

In addition, it should be pointed out that the author is not only flawlessly fluent in Greek composition, but he also knows the Hebrew Bible, evidently in Hebrew.[38] Moreover, he knows the book of 1 Enoch, arguably in Aramaic.[39] As a result, we have here an author who is not merely literate—able to read, apparently effortlessly—in three languages, but fully writing-

literate in one of them (a second language for him, if he were a native of rural Palestine). How could this be true of Jesus' brother, an Aramaic-speaking peasant from a small hamlet of Galilee, who no doubt like his father was a common laborer?[40]

As a side note, I might mention that we have some record about Jude's family from later times, which gives us no indication that it came from the upper classes that could afford the time and money for education. Hegesippus tells the story of Jude's grandsons brought before the emperor Domitian, when he learned they were from the line of David and so, possibly, instigators of a kind of messianic uprising against the state. These men convinced Domitian that they were poor farmers who could barely eke out an existence working full-time on the land, showing him their calloused hands as proof. And so he set them free (Eusebius *H.E*. 3.19–20). There can be little doubt that the report is apocryphal. It defies belief that the Roman emperor himself would cross-examine Jewish peasants from Palestine, let alone that he would do so out of fear that their insurgency might cripple his empire. But the story does show how Jude's family was remembered in the early church: not as aristocratic elites with wealth and leisure to receive the refined benefits of higher education. Just the contrary, they continued to be known as lower-class peasants who engaged in full-time manual labor simply to survive. Nothing suggests that their progenitor, Jude, was any different.

In short, the book of Jude appears to have been written relatively late in the first century, after the age of the apostles, by a highly educated Greek-speaking (and -writing) Christian who was able to negotiate the complexities of both the Hebrew Bible and surviving Aramaic literature. Whoever this elite, well-trained figure was, he was not the Aramaic-speaking peasant of Nazareth, the brother of Jesus and James.

The Nature of the Polemic

The epistle of Jude presents an outpouring of invective against a group of persons who have allegedly infiltrated the Christian community, wreaking havoc in their wake. In the influential view of Frederik Wisse, the "heresy" promoted by these persons has no real content.[41] These persons are accused of being wildly licentious (v. 4) and of denying "our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4). This shows that the predictions of the apostles have

come to pass, that the readers are indeed living "in the last time" (v. 17). Wisse appears to be absolutely right that the author of this short piece of polemic must grossly exaggerate the character of his opponents: "It is beyond belief that persons of this description could have been accepted and tolerated in a Christian congregation, much less have slipped in unnoticed."[42] But he probably goes too far in claiming that the author would have not written pseudonymously to an unspecified group of readers if he had wanted to address a specific problem. Pseudepigraphic polemics regularly attack specific problems and deal with concrete issues. Moreover, we can indeed say some things more concretely about the views of these enemies to the true "faith once delivered to the saints" (v. 3).

For one thing, the opponents are portrayed as having come from the outside and having infiltrated the community (v. 4). It is not at all clear that we should accept their outsider status: this part of the polemic could easily have arisen from the concern not to concede that "the truth" was perverted from the inside. But that the opponents were *eventually* inside the community should at least be clear. Otherwise it is impossible to explain the author's vexation.

Modern interpreters have taken the portrayal of the enemies as licentious reprobates to two equally unlikely extremes. Some, such as Gerhard Sellin, have discounted all of the language of moral iniquity and claimed that modern interpreters have read licentiousness into the book instead of out of it.[43] Even though other parts of Sellin's understanding of the book are attractive, it is difficult to concede to him this particular point. Whatever else the author wanted to say about his opponents, charges of antinomian behavior figure prominently (thus: ἀσέλγεια v. 4, ἐκπορνεύσασαι v. 7 [spoken about Sodom and Gomorrah, but the opponents behave "in a similar way"]; σάρκα . . . μιαίνουσιν, v. 8; συνευωχούμενοι, v. 12; αἰσχύνας, v. 13; κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἑαυτῶν πορευόμενοι, v. 16; κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν, v. 18). The other extreme is represented by Bauckham, who claims that the author is concerned with antinomianism and nothing but antinomianism.[44] This view overlooks other charges leveled against the opponents, or at least it has to force them into an uncomfortable antinomian mold, as they are said to "deny … Christ" (v. 4); to "revile glorious ones" (v. 8); to follow the error of Balaam and the

rebellion of Korah (v. 11); and to be grumblers, boasters, and flatterers (v. 16)—none of which necessarily involves licentious lifestyles.

Something more specific about the enemies' alleged antinomian behavior is suggested by v. 4: they "alter the grace of our God into licentiousness" (τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν χάριτα μετατιθέντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν). In other words, they take the teaching of χάρις too far, thinking that the Christian religion is all about grace, not about how one lives. For them—in the judgment of their opponent, the author—antinomian living is a consequence of the teaching of grace. In an earlier period, Paul himself, an advocate of χάρις, was accused of holding some such view: "Just as some claim that we say, 'let us do evil so that good might come'" (Rom. 3:8). Paul naturally denies the charge, but one can see how it might be taken, by others, to be the logical conclusion of his teaching of divine grace and the justifying effect of faith apart from "works of the Law." But the charge makes even better sense against later forms of Paulinism, such as that represented in the book of Ephesians, a forgery that states quite explicitly that one is saved not by doing good deeds but solely by the grace (χάρις) of God: "For you have been saved by grace, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not from works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8–9).

The author of Ephesians takes Paul's teaching on faith and grace a step beyond Paul, in indicating that good behavior can have no bearing on "being saved." The opponents of Jude allegedly take the matter a step further still: antinomian activity demonstrates the full grace of God, which alone brings salvation. Or at least the author of Jude *portrays* his opponents as making that argument. Whether they did so or not is anyone's guess; but it does give one pause that Paul himself was falsely accused of something similar already decades earlier.[45] In any event, this charge against what appears to be a (post-)Pauline position can help explain why the author claims to be Jude, the brother of James. As Sellin recognized, this author is uniting with the epistle of James in opposing a view of grace that renders the moral life of the Christian immaterial.[46]

But there is even more in the polemic of Jude to suggest that the opponents are being constructed as representing a form of Pauline Christianity. One of the specific charges leveled against them is that they denigrate and revile angels. Bauckham, who sees the problem with the opponents purely in antinomian terms, has difficulty explaining this charge.

In his view, these angels are possibly the ones who delivered the Law; they are reviled by those who violate it—an implausible view, since nothing is said about the "glorious ones" being those who delivered the commandments to Moses. A better alternative has been proposed by Sellin and, to some extent dependent on him, Frey.[47] The denigration of angelic beings was part of the Pauline tradition.

Before turning to Paul, consider the comments of Jude. According to v. 8, the opponents not only "defile the flesh," they also "reject authority" and "revile glorious ones." In v. 10 again they are said to "revile what they do not understand." They are unlike the archangel Michael, who did not dare to revile the Devil (v. 9). Moreover, the one explicit quotation of the short epistle is of 1 Enoch in vv. 14–15, a passage that also relates to angels, as does the allusion to the Book of the Watchers (presumably) in v. 6.[48] As Frey notes, the "decisive point for the author lies in his angelology."[49]

Where in the Christian tradition are angels devalued? As Frey points out, we already see a movement in this direction, possibly, in the undisputed Paul, where the phenomenon of glossolalia already places believers on the same level as angels (1 Cor. 13:1). Moreover, for Paul, rulers, powers, and authorities are considered inferior forces, subject to Christ in the end (1 Cor. 15:24). And believers are said to be the future judges of angels (1 Cor. 6:3). In Galatians Paul devalues the Law precisely because it was given through angels (Gal. 3:19).

This depotentizing of angels is carried out yet further in the Deutero-Pauline epistles. Angelic powers are part of the creation overcome by Christ (Col. 1:16; 2:10; Eph. 1:21); they are stripped through Christ's triumph over the powers (Col. 2:15), and for that reason they are decidedly not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18). This final verse is especially key for Sellin and Frey. As Frey states: "It is thus certainly imaginable that an attitude like the one mentioned by the author of Colossians appeared to the author of Jude as a denial of the cosmological and eschatological significance of the angels and the order represented by them."[50] Or as Sellin earlier put it:

> Connections … may well exist between the author of Colossians, who polemicizes against angel-worshippers, and the heretics of the Epistle of Jude. After all, it becomes apparent in Col 2:18 that the tenets of the Law and the service of angels, on one hand, and

> antinomianism and the despising of angels, on the other hand, belong together. The heretics of the Epistle of Jude thus appear to me to be standing in a Pauline tradition whose oldest witness is Colossians.[51]

Despite the attractiveness of this position, it should be pointed out that the polemic of Jude appears to be directed at Pauline Christians who have taken their views (whether actually or simply in the author's fertile imagination) yet a step farther than that evidenced in the Deutero-Pauline epistles of Ephesians and Colossians. Just as the opponents do not merely insist that χάρις apart from good works brings salvation (as in Ephesians), but go much farther (allegedly) in promoting an actual antinomian lifestyle, so too the opponents do not merely discourage the worship of angels (as in the Deutero-Paulines), but they (allegedly) actively denigrate them. Thus even though the opponents do not take a position attested in any of the canonical Pauline writings, they stand in a clear Pauline trajectory.

It is impossible to say whether any such opponents really existed. But they certainly existed in the imagination of the author, whose attacks appear to be directed against Pauline Christians.[52] It is this opposition to Paul—at least as conceived in the mind of the author—that explains, then, the choice of the pseudonym "Jude." P. Davids is off-base to argue that an author wanting to choose a false name would not have chosen an "obscure" figure such as Jude, as we saw out the outset. Indeed, this author chose to polemicize against the Pauline tradition in a way that makes patent sense. By choosing the name Jude he has established his credentials as one closely related to James of Jerusalem, and he, in fact, stands in clear lines of continuity with the letter allegedly written by his more famous brother. His grounds of attack are different, but the target is the same: Paulinists whose radical views had led to the rejection of all authority, angelic and moral.[53]

THE EPISTULA PETRI

Although the Epistula Petri is one of the "introductory writings" of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, it is not altogether clear that it was composed to serve that function. The "Preachings" of Peter at issue in the letter are not the *Homilies* of Clement themselves. Indeed, they appear to be a collection

of writings that were earlier sent by Peter to "James, the lord and bishop of the holy church" (1:1),[54] whether this was an actual collection, or more likely, a fiction alluded to simply to provide the occasion of the letter. Moreover, Clement is not mentioned in the letter. For these reasons, despite common scholarly opinion, the letter may have been composed independently and was only added to the *Homilies* secondarily.[55]

The purpose of the letter is to instruct James to follow the example set by Moses among "those who belong to his people" for the transmission of sacred literature. Just as Moses passed his books only to specially selected individuals who could be trusted, so too the books of Peter's preaching are not to be given to "any one of the gentiles," nor to any "of our own tribe" before they have gone through a period of trial to demonstrate that they are trustworthy. The reason for Peter's concern is clear: there have been some gentiles "who have rejected my lawful preaching [that is preaching about and in accordance with the Law], and have preferred a lawless and absurd doctrine of the man who is my enemy" (2.3). These gentile enemies have tried to "distort my words by interpretations of many sorts as if I taught the dissolution of the Law" (2.4). But for Peter this is a heinous charge, for he would never oppose "the Law of God which was made known by Moses" and which was borne witness to by Jesus, who indicated that none of the Law will ever pass away while there is a heaven and earth (quoting Matt. 5:18). Peter, in other words, is in full support of the Mosaic Law, which continues in full force; to think otherwise is to oppose God, Moses, and Jesus (2.5). It is only "the man who is my enemy," and the gentiles he has influenced, who have twisted Peter's words to make him appear to say otherwise.

No one thinks that the actual author of this short letter was Peter himself. But it was certainly someone who wanted his readers to think he was Peter. And the identity of his opponent is no mystery: it is Paul ("the man who is my enemy") and his followers ("the gentiles").

The idea that care was needed in passing along important texts was a commonplace in the ancient world, where books copied by hand were open not only to misinterpretation but also to physical alteration. Comparable concerns can be found, for example, in Galen's *De libris propriis* 11: "I ordered that these notes should be shared only with those who would read the books with a teacher." So too in the Apocryphon of James from Nag

Hammadi, a writing also connected with Peter:

> You have asked me to send you a secret book revealed to me and Peter by the master, and I could not turn you down, nor could I speak to you, so [I have written] it in Hebrew and have sent it to you, and to you alone. But since you are a minister of the salvation of the saints, do your best to be careful not to communicate to many people this book that the Savior did not want to communicate even to all of us, his twelve disciples. (1.8ff.)[56]

That Paul is the unnamed "man who is my enemy" is not open to much doubt.[57] This is someone who has an enormous effect on "the gentiles" and who preaches a "lawless gospel." This latter phrase is shorthand for a gospel message that proclaims a person can be made right with God without keeping the Jewish Law, an apt description of Paul's message in a book such as Galatians, sent to gentiles and insisting on justification apart from "works of the Law." It is striking that the author of the Epistula Petri is particularly concerned that this "enemy" proclaims that Peter himself supports his "lawless gospel." That is precisely Paul's claim in Galatians, as he indicates that the pillars of the Jerusalem church, James, Cephas, and John, "added nothing to me" and in fact "gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. 2:6, 9). According to Paul, Peter agreed with his law-free gospel. However one construes the precise nuances of the matter—a much-disputed topic—the Antioch incident of Gal. 2:11–14, in Paul's eyes, was a matter of Peter's hypocrisy. Whereas Peter had formerly, in Jerusalem, agreed with Paul's gentile gospel, and acted out this agreement in having table fellowship with gentiles (who obviously were not keeping kosher), he changed his mind and his behavior so as not to give offense, once members of "the circumcision" came to town as representatives of James. In Paul's eyes, Peter's offense was that he began to act as if he did not agree with the law-free gospel after he had already, overtly, agreed.

The Epistula Petri may well be referring to the account of the Antioch incident in Galatians when it charges its enemies with maintaining that Peter agreed with "the dissolution of the Law" but that he "did not express it openly"—in other words, that he held to a Pauline view, but did not publicly say so. This is the charge that Paul levels against Peter in the

passage of Galatians, before stating baldly: "knowing that a person is not justified by works of the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, because from the works of the Law will no one be justified" (2:16). This, then, is the "lawless" gospel that Peter opposes in the Epistula Petri, and that his enemies falsely accuse him of affirming.

It is striking that other forgeries of early Christianity do indeed claim that Peter agreed with Paul in his law-free gospel message. As we have seen, that is one of the overarching themes of the book of Acts, a non-pseudepigraphic forgery allegedly by one of Paul's own companions. In Acts it is not Paul who first learns that the gospel is to come to gentiles apart from the Law, but Peter (Acts 10). And it is not Paul who first converts gentiles to the law-free faith, but, again, Peter (Acts 10–11). Moreover Peter and James—even more than in Paul's account of Galatians 2—are completely aligned with Paul's law-free gospel in Acts; at the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15 everyone sees eye-to-eye: the gentiles are not to keep the Law in order to receive salvation through Jesus. This, for Acts, is the explicit message of Peter, the alleged sender of the Epistula Petri (Acts 15:7–11); James, the alleged recipient of the Epistula (Acts 15:13–21); and Paul, the enemy described in the letter (Acts 15:12).[58]

A similar message is presented in the forged 1 Peter, which advocates a Pauline gospel in the name of Peter, and yet more obviously in the forged 2 Peter, where the author not only doth protest too much that he really is Peter, but also claims to be on the same theological page as Paul, whose writings he classifies among "the Scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:16). There are in fact interesting and ironic similarities between 2 Peter and the Epistula Petri. In the latter "Peter" expresses his chagrin over those who have twisted his teachings by false interpretation, making him sound as if he supports the lawless gospel message of his enemy (Paul). 2 Peter, on the other hand, complains of alleged followers of Paul who twist Paul's words away from a Petrine view. And so, in one book it is the writings of Peter that are twisted, in the other it is the writings of Paul. In both instances the twisting involves false and, one might say, unauthorized interpretations. But in the case of 2 Peter, the false interpretations portray Peter and Paul as standing at odds with one another; in the case of the Epistula Petri they portray them as standing in unity.

It is not difficult to imagine that the Epistula Petri arose because of other forgeries, some of them in the name of Peter, that maintained that Peter and Paul agreed on the Pauline understanding of a so-called law-free gospel. If so, then it would be another instance of counterforgery. Its subsequent attachment to the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* makes sense, not only because it celebrates the importance of Peter, but also because it does so at the expense of Paul, a theme that recurs at other places in the *Homilies*, as we will see below.

It is interesting, then, to trace the history of Peter and Paul through these various writings. The historical Peter himself may well have held to the ongoing importance of the Law, at least for Jews. That would explain his actions in Antioch, as maligned by Paul in Gal. 2:11–14. Again, on the historical level, this may indeed have led to a falling out between the apostle to the circumcised and the apostle to the uncircumcised. Later, forgeries were produced taking a stand on this conflict. In the not-so-subtle account of the non-pseudepigraphic forgery allegedly produced by one of Paul's own companions, the book of Acts, the two apostles are portrayed as being in complete and perfect harmony. With greater subtlety the same lesson is conveyed in the forged 1 Peter. Later still all subtlety is once again abandoned, when yet a third Paulinist forged the letter of 2 Peter. On the other side of the equation an anti-Paulinist forged the Epistula Petri in order to counter this (false) opinion that the two apostles saw eye-to-eye, since, for this author, the harmony of the two would necessarily mean that Peter ultimately agreed with Paul. But for the Epistula Petri, the two did not agree, because Paul was the enemy. Moreover, in their dispute, Peter was right and Paul was wrong. And what is more, James of Jerusalem agreed with Peter.

THE EPISTULA CLEMENTIS

Another forgery that survives as one of the introductory writings to the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* is the Epistula Clementis. Although not usually recognized as such, the Epistula is a kind of "church order," comprising instructions about different church offices given to Clement, ordained to be the bishop of Rome by the apostle Peter. The key emphasis at the beginning and end of these orders concerns this ordination, as Peter passes along to his unwilling successor the power to bind and to loose. The

overarching concern of the book, then, is to show that Clement is the one who carries Peter's authority in the governance of the church. As W. Ullmann puts it, "What we are here confronted with is the perfectly clear and unambiguous institution of an heir by St. Peter.… Clement was elevated onto the throne, the cathedra, of Peter by the apostle himself."[59]

The letter falsely claims to be written by Clement to "James, the lord and bishop of bishops, who governs the holy church of the Hebrews at Jerusalem" (1.1).[60] This address functions to establish the authority of James and, by implication, the importance of a Jewish understanding of the faith: James is both the leader of the "church of the Hebrews" and the "bishop of bishops." More particularly the address stresses the connection of Rome and Jerusalem, the two ultimate seats of power in the early church, whose two leaders are in complete agreement. Of special interest, Clement, bishop of Rome who has all the power of Peter to bind and loose, and so is superior to every convert to the faith, is subordinate not only to Peter but also to James, "who rules … the churches everywhere." This then is a Jewish-Christian forgery meant to promote a kind of Jewish Christianity. Correspondingly, the letter is written in no small measure to oppose Paul and the kind of Christianity he represents.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, the emphasis placed on Peter, often in implicit contrast to Paul. Peter is the "first fruit of our Lord, the first of the apostles to whom the Father first revealed the Son" (1.3). Here there seems to be a clear contrast with the Paul of the undisputed letters, who gloried in the fact that at his conversion "[God] was pleased to reveal his Son to me" (Gal. 1:16). It was Peter, the Epistula Clementis avers, who was a "table-companion and fellow traveller" with Jesus (1.3). Later in the *Homilies* this long acquaintance with Jesus will be used to set Peter over against Paul, who knew Jesus only from a brief vision (Hom. 17.13–19). Peter was appointed, "as the most capable of all" to "enlighten the darkest part of the world, the West, and was enabled to achieve it" (1.3). For those familiar with other early Christian literature, the contrasting claims of Paul are stark: he himself expressed a wish to preach in Rome (Rom. 1:15) and planned a mission to the far West (Rom. 15:22–29). Moreover, according to the Roman 1 Clem. 5:7, it was precisely Paul who took the gospel to the West.

For the Epistula Clementis it was Peter who proclaimed Christ "to all the world … saving men by his God-willed teaching" (1.5). Later Clement is

called “the better first-fruits among the gentiles who are saved through me [Peter]” (3.4). It is not Paul who was the God-appointed missionary to the gentiles. The letter also speaks of “the evil one [who] has begun a war against His bride” (4.2). This may well be a reference to the devil as “the evil one.” But it is also important to note that the way the evil one works is principally from inside the community, as Peter explicitly states at the end of the letter:

> If anyone remains a friend to those with whom he (the bishop) is at enmity, and speaks with those with whom he does not consort, he is himself one of those who wish to destroy the Church. For he who is with you in the body, but in his mind is not with you, he is against you, far more dangerous than the enemies who are visible outside, since with seeming friendship he scatters those within. (18.3–4)

Given the celebration of both Peter and James, and the obvious contrast being made between Peter and Paul—not to mention the context of the letter, coming in its transmitted state after the Epistula Petri and before the *Homilies*—it may well be that Paul is the enemy within.

In an even subtler way, this letter may evidence long-standing tensions between Peter and Paul, specifically with regard to the legitimate leadership of the church of Rome. Here it is Peter—emphatically not Paul—who is the chief apostle of the Roman church; he ordains his successor directly by a public ceremony of laying on of hands. Clement is presented as Peter’s most important gentile convert to the faith and follower, who assumes the mantle of leadership only unwillingly.[61]

This view stands in contrast with the position taken by Irenaeus, who indicates that prior to Clement there were two other bishops, Linus and Anecletus, and that Peter and Paul *together* were responsible for the bishopric of Clement.[62] Irenaeus explicitly states that the church in Rome, which was “very great, very ancient, and universally known” was “founded and organized … by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul” (*Adv. Haer*. 3.3.2) Both apostles committed the church into the care of Linus, who was succeeded by Anecletus, and then Clement. Clement himself knew both apostles and had “the preaching of the apostles still echoing in his ears and their tradition before his eyes” (*Adv. Haer*. 3.3.3). Irenaeus’ concern to

stress the unity of Peter and Paul in the subsequent Roman leadership is especially clear in the following claim:

> This succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth. (*Adv. Haer*. 3.3.3)

It is worth noting in this connection that Linus and Clement, mentioned by Irenaeus, are both associated in the New Testament with Paul (2 Tim. 4:21; Phil. 4:3), but never with Peter.

How different is the view of the Pseudo-Clementines themselves, and of the writings that now introduce them, including the Epistula Clementis, which presses for the superiority of Peter at the expense of Paul, and stresses that it was he alone who chose his successor to sit on his cathedra.

The orthodox concern for a unified Pauline-Petrine front in the leadership of Rome is found in a different way, later, in Eusebius, who indicates (contra Irenaeus) that Linus was called to be the bishop of the church only after Paul and Peter had been martyred (*H.E*. 3.2). Moreover, for Eusebius, Linus was the first bishop after Peter, and Clement the third (no reference to Anecletus; *H.E*. 3.4). Eusebius does not indicate who ordained Linus or Clement, but he does note that Clement was Paul's companion and co-worker, with reference, again, to Phil. 4:3.

Yet more interesting, from about the time of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, the Apostolic Constitutions indicates that the first bishop of Rome was Linus, who was ordained by Paul, and that the second was Clement, ordained by Peter (7.46). Does this reflect an early conflict found among factions in Rome, where some claimed that Paul was the one responsible for establishing the line of bishops and others claiming that it was Peter? Were there divisions in Rome comparable to what are earlier attested for Corinth ("I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas"; 1 Cor. 1:12)? If so, it is no mystery which side of the debate eventually won out, as the less-than-conciliatory view represented in the forged Epistula Clementis became dominant: Peter founded the church and appointed his own

successor, thus beginning the Roman apostolic line traced back to the chief disciple himself.

At every point, there were conciliatory voices, which cannot, however, agree among themselves about how to effect the conciliation. For some, both apostles appointed Linus; for others, Peter appointed Clement, Paul's companion; for others Paul appointed the first successor and Peter the second. Conciliation between the two apostles is found in other literature as well, including the forged pro-Pauline documents we have considered so far and the even more famous letter of 1 Clement, falsely attributed, not by accident, to Clement of Rome, but in fact written by the Roman church precisely to the church of Corinth, earlier divided along apostolic lines (1 Cor. 1:12), in which Peter and Paul are jointly portrayed as the two great apostles of the earlier generation (1 Clement 5).

It would be a mistake, however, to see the Epistula Clementis as being principally concerned with establishing a polemical position against Paul. The vast bulk of the letter is an early church order, with instructions and exhortations to the bishops, presbyters, deacons, and catechists of the church, and an extended analogy of the church as a ship with different crew members sailing over the rough seas of life. Moreover, the letter is set up to be an introduction to the Clementine *Homilies*. But in another sense the "set up" is precisely the point, as the *Homilies* too imagine a real threat from within, associated to some extent, at least with Paul. Here too is a forgery that, in part, attacks Paul's views with the authority of Peter and, by implication, James, as mediated through Clement, bishop of the church of Rome and the one who was ordained to his position through Peter, the one who had been given the power to bind and to loose.

PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE RECOGNITIONS AND HOMILIES

The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* represent two reworkings of an earlier Christian novel that described, principally, the conversion of the Roman Clement to the Christian faith through the ministration of the apostle Peter, and the proclamations and missionary adventures of the two afterward. The novel itself—the so-called Grundschrift—was probably composed in the early third century; its two surviving, heavily modified, iterations appear to stem from fourth-century Syria.[63] Both the *Recognitions* and *Homilies* are forged in the name of

Clement himself; the former begins with the claim "I Clement, who was born in the city of Rome was from my earliest age a lover of chastity" (1.1), and goes from there. The *Homilies* begin similarly.[64]

Until recent years, the overwhelming concern of scholarship on the Pseudo-Clementines involved the vexed question of sources and of sources behind the sources: their extent, literary character, theological views, polemical targets, and dates. Few problems in early Christian studies have proved more intractable and convoluted. Since my interests in the present study are not with hypothetical sources that may have been forged, but with surviving texts, I will not delve into the source questions and the detailed arguments that have generated the *opinio communis* that has more or less emerged here in the twenty-first century, except to say that the Grundschrift is widely thought to have been a Jewish-Christian production that, in part at least, represented a polemic against Marcionite understandings of the faith,[65] and that the source behind *Recognitions* 1.27–71 is widely taken to have been an attempt to rewrite, in some sense, the Christian history presented in the book of Acts, about which I will have more to say later.[66]

More recent scholarship, particularly in the insightful work of Nicole Kelley and Annette Yoshiko Reed, has bypassed the question of sources and approached the Pseudo-Clementines in their final form, asking what they can tell us about the social and theological conflicts within Christianity at the time and place of their production, fourth-century Syria.[67] These sophisticated analyses are relevant to such matters as the production and promotion of (some kind of) "Jewish Christianity" and the subtle polemics against unnamed opponents. For the present, however, I am principally interested in the several passages—incorporated, it appears, from earlier sources—that reflect opposition to Paul. In two of these passages the ostensible target is Simon Magus, Peter's nemesis on the missionary trail throughout the narratives. Scholars have long recognized that in some instances Simon is a cipher for Paul himself. This does not mean that in every episode involving Simon one should think of Paul. Quite the contrary, scholars such as Mark Edwards and, especially, Dominique Côté have shown that Simon is not a simple, coded figure, standing necessarily for Paul, his later follower Marcion, or even Simon Magus himself. He is a composite figure encompassing the bad features of all these persons, and

more.[68] It is nonetheless equally clear that in some of the polemic against Simon we are seeing polemic against Paul.

Recognitions 1.66–71

The one place where Paul is clearly in view and under attack, but not under the cipher of Simon, is in *Recognitions* 1.66–71. This is the concluding episode of the first instruction given to Clement by Peter, and as just noted, is widely taken to have been drawn from an earlier source that comprises 1.27–71, to be discussed as a whole later.[69] The instruction traces the history of God's interaction with humans from the creation of the world down to Clement's own day. In his speech Peter predicts that the Jerusalem Temple would be destroyed because the "time of sacrifices" has "passed away" with the coming of Jesus.[70] The Jewish sacrificial system, established by Moses as a compromising and temporary measure, has now been surpassed. This declaration causes an uproar among the Jewish priests, who are calmed by Gamaliel, called "a chief of the people," even though in fact he is portrayed as a secret Christian. Gamaliel promises that a public debate will be held on the next day to "oppose and clearly confute every error." His Jewish listeners assume that he means to confute the Christians, though in fact, as a secret follower of Jesus himself, he evidently plans to vindicate the Christian cause.

Gamaliel comes the next day to the scene of the debate with James, "the chief of the bishops," who enters into a public discussion with the chief priest Caiaphas. On the basis of arguments taken from the Jewish Scriptures, James shows that two advents of the Christ were foretold, one in humility and one in glory, and argues that no one could receive the remission of sins or enter the kingdom of heaven without being baptized in water "in the name of the threefold blessedness, as the true Prophet taught." James, as it turns out, is remarkably successful in his proclamation, such that over the course of seven days "he persuaded all the people and the high priest that they should hasten straightway to receive baptism." In other words, the entire Jewish nation, including its priestly leaders, are on the verge of converting to become followers of Jesus.

And then Paul arrives on the scene (ch. 70). He is not named, but it is quite clearly him: he is described as "one of our enemies" and in the next

chapter he receives letters from the high priest to persecute the believers in Jesus in Damascus, an obvious reference to Acts 9. Just as the Jewish nation is about to turn to faith in Jesus, Paul intervenes and creates a ruckus, argues publicly with James, and begins "to excite the people and to raise a tumult" and "to drive all into confusion with shouting and to undo what had been arranged with much labor." He then turns to violence, starts a riot so that "much blood was shed," and himself "attacked James and threw him headlong from the top of the steps" of the Temple, thinking that he had killed him (1.70).

This is obviously not a positive portrayal of Paul. He is the enemy; he is violently opposed to James—tries, in fact, to kill him. He prevents the wild success of the Christian mission, which was on the verge of converting the entire Jewish nation, even the high priest, to faith in Christ. This, to be sure, is the "pre-Christian" Paul. But there is no word anywhere in the book of his repenting of what he did or converting. For the *Recognitions*, penned in the name of Clement, the eventual leader of the church in Rome and Peter's right-hand man, Paul remains the enemy.

Homilies 2.15–18

Anti-Pauline polemic may also lie behind the famous discussion of the divinely ordained "pairs" (syzygies) in Hom. 2.15–18. In this address to Clement Peter provides a kind of schematized *Heilsgeschichte*, according to which God sends forth all things, including human beings, in pairs, with the inferior and the wicked preceding the superior and the good. And so, the temporary world precedes eternity; ignorance precedes knowledge. So too with "the leaders of prophecy": the wicked Cain came before the righteous Abel, Ishmael preceded Isaac. Peter then applies the logic to his own situation:

> It were possible, following this order, to perceive to what series Simon (Magus) belongs, who came before me (Simon Peter) to the Gentiles, and to which I belong who have come after him, and have come in upon him as light upon darkness, as knowledge upon ignorance, as healing upon disease. (ch. 17)

Later Peter points out that the Anti-Christ comes before Christ returns. And so on.

As earlier noted, Simon Magus is not simply a cipher for Paul throughout Peter's discourses. But one cannot help but draw the inferences in this case, as it is Paul in the Christian tradition who first goes out in the gentile mission field as the apostle to the gentiles.[71] In this understanding of things, Peter must follow in Paul's footsteps to correct those he has led astray.[72]

Homilies 17.13–19

A much clearer polemic against Paul occurs in *Homilies* 17.13–19, an attack by Peter on "Simon's" authorization to preach his version of the gospel based on an alleged vision of Christ. As Graham Stanton has recognized, in this case "there can be no doubt at all that behind the mask of Simon Magus stands Paul."[73] Among other things, as Stanton notes, whereas the authenticating visionary experience is widely associated with Paul (cf. Galatians 1–2; Acts 9), in the Pseudo-Clementines Simon Magus never (elsewhere) appeals to a vision of Jesus.

The scene begins with Simon objecting to Peter's claims about Jesus. He, Simon, has had a vision, and since visions come from God, one need not question their reliability. Peter, however, gets the upper hand in his reply. The one "who trusts to apparition or vision and dream is insecure. For he does not know to whom he is trusting. For it is possible either that he may be an evil demon or a deceptive spirit, pretending in his speeches to be what he is not" (ch. 14). Moreover, no one can question or converse with a vision, only with a living person. Indeed, it is evil demons who appear to the impious enemies of God. What is more: "Statements of wrath are made through visions and dreams, but the statements to a friend are made face to face … not through riddles and visions and dreams, as to an enemy" (ch. 18). Peter then draws his conclusion: "If, then, our Jesus appeared to you in a vision, made Himself known to you, and spoke to you, it was as one who is enraged with an adversary."

Simon's alleged vision contrasts with Peter's own interaction with Jesus: "But can anyone be rendered fit for instruction through apparitions? And if you say, 'It is possible,' then I ask, 'why did our teacher abide and

discourse a whole year to those who were awake?'" (ch. 19). Peter then issues a challenge:

> But if you were seen and taught by Him, and became His apostle for a single hour, proclaim His utterances, interpret His sayings, love His apostles, contend not with me who accompanied Him. For in direct opposition to me, who am a firm rock, the foundation of the Church, you now stand. If you were not opposed to me, you would not accuse me, and revile the truth proclaimed by me. (ch. 19)

Here we see the real issue: it is a conflict between Peter, the firm rock, and the apostle Paul, the unstable visionary, who uttered a contrary proclamation on the basis of an alleged revelation, and in so doing stood opposed to the one who spent an entire year in the presence of Jesus and was chosen by him to serve as the foundation of the church. As Stanton points out, that the author has the conflict of Peter and Paul clearly in mind is shown above all by the verbal links between the passage and the account of the Antioch incident in Gal. 2:11–14. In the *Homilies* Peter claims that Paul stands opposed to Peter (ἐναντίος ἀνθέστηκας μοι) just as in Gal. 2:11 Paul claims that he stood opposed to Peter (κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην; same verb). And in both cases the opposition is said to be because Peter stood κατεγνωσμένος..[74]

Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and Clement

By no stretch of the imagination can the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* be seen as principally polemical confrontations with Paul and Pauline Christianity. These are long, complex, and involved books with an array of other agendas.[75] At the same time, there are clear anti-Pauline elements scattered throughout their narratives and speeches. These anti-Pauline elements stand in stark contrast with the views we saw earlier in forgeries that championed Paul and his message, most notably the New Testament book of Acts. In these fourth-century forgeries, Paul's vision of the resurrected Jesus is not affirmed as an experience that authorizes his gospel message; on the contrary it is maligned and mocked. Here Paul is

not shown standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Peter in his missionary activities; instead he is portrayed as one of Peter's enemies, attacked with some vehemence by the one chosen by Christ to be the foundation for the church. So too with James, whom Paul tries to murder and whose success in converting the entire Jewish nation is disrupted by none other than Paul. Here Paul's law-free gospel is portrayed as being at odds with the gospel of Christ, as we will see further in the chapter that follows.

In this connection it is interesting to see how two of the "co-workers" of Paul known from the New Testament writings are portrayed here. Barnabas figures importantly in the Pseudo-Clementine narrative (see *Recognitions* 1.7–13). He is the one who, at the beginning of the account, first comes to Rome, makes contact with the pagan Clement, preaches the true gospel in his presence, urges him to sail to Palestine to learn the truth of the gospel, and then meets him in Judea and introduces him to Peter, the hero of the account. There is nothing that ties Barnabas to Paul here; on the contrary, he is Peter's man and follows Peter's gospel. In fact, the reason he does not personally accompany Clement to Judea, but must precede him, is because he has to hurry back to celebrate a Jewish festival: "he hastened his departure, saying that he must by all means celebrate at Judea a festal day of his religion that was approaching" (1.10). Barnabas, companion of Peter, and responsible for the fate of the future leader of the Roman church, Clement, is Jewish to the core, continuing to observe Jewish festivals still as a Christian. Is this a poke at the Pauline law-free gospel? In any event, not just Peter but also Barnabas stands over against Paul in this account, even though in the book of Acts Barnabas is closely connected precisely with Paul.

Then there is Clement. In the New Testament he has no connection with Peter but only with Paul, his "co-worker" who "contended together with me in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3). But not in these books forged in his name. He is converted by Peter, he follows Peter, he accepts Peter's gospel, he accepts Peter's castigation of Paul. And so not only Barnabas but also Clement has been taken from Paul and given to Peter, the foundation of the church who stands against Paul, his authority, and his message.

The Counterforgery of Recognitions 1.27–71

It has generally been conceded by scholars of the Pseudo-Clementines that the anti-Pauline polemic of *Recognitions* 1.66–71 is part of a larger unit (chapters 27–71), which was taken over by the author, but not from the Grundschrift.[76] The grounds are solid: it is a coherent unit, it has no parallel in the *Homilies*, and its views in some ways contrast with those of the *Recognitions* otherwise, for example, in the elevated role it gives to Jesus in relationship to Moses.[77] Gerd Lüdemann argued that the passage was intended to present an alternative view of the development of church history to that found in the New Testament book of Acts, in fact that it "sets out to correct a section of Luke's Acts with its own version of the story."[78]

No one has developed this line of thought more fully than F. Stanley Jones, and although the argument is generally made with reference to the source itself, the same can be said of its incorporation in the fuller account of the *Recognitions*.[79] Jones lists a number of parallels between the account and the book of Acts, including as the most secure: Rec. 1.65.2–3 parallels Acts 5:34–39 (Gamaliel calming the crowd); Rec. 1.71.3–4 parallels Acts 9:1–2, 22:4–5, 26:10–12 (Paul arranges with the high priest to persecute the Christians); and Rec. 1.36.2 parallels Acts 3:22–23 (quotations of Deut. 18:15 and Lev. 23:29). Several other overlaps Jones considers "probable": Rec. 1.34.2 parallels Acts 7:8 (summary of the genealogy of Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs); Rec. 1.41.1–2 parallels Acts 2:22–24 (Jesus is crucified even though he performed signs and wonders); and Rec. 1.71.2 parallels Acts 4:4 (five thousand flee Jerusalem to Jericho). Jones finds twenty-two other instances of parallels that he considers "possible." What he finds particularly striking is that in many of these instances the overlaps include aspects of Lukan redaction, showing that the author of this portion of the *Recognitions* is actually using Acts.

More than that, the author behind *Recognitions* 1.27–71 has changed the story of Acts in significant ways. Here Paul, as we have seen, is the villain rather than the hero of the story; he hinders instead of promotes the Christian mission; and he is never said to convert. In Jones's opinion, the author of this source behind the *Recognitions* wanted to outstrip Acts by writing a better history; in fact, his account was intended to "replace Acts."[80]

There are clear problems with this view as a wholesale explanation for Rec. 1.27–71. Most obviously, the majority of the passage does not cover

the same scope or material as the book of Acts: it is a description of the history of the world from its very beginning up to the seventh year after Christ's death. Most of it, in other words, has nothing to do with Acts, as recognized by Stanton: "so many of its traditions are unrelated to Luke's Acts that rivalry as a primary purpose should not be pressed too far."[81] Moreover, the way the passage treats Acts is not noticeably different from the way it treats its other sources, principally the Hebrew Bible, in radically shortening the narrative and emphasizing certain key points. Surely one would not argue that its author was trying to replace the Hebrew Bible as well.[82]

Even so, Lüdemann and Jones have made a good point, that the retelling of the incidents from Acts is, in Stanton's words, "tendentious and imaginative."[83] To that extent, its narrative appears intent on countering the views of Luke, clearly from a Jewish-Christian (as opposed to Pauline) perspective. This portion of the Pseudo-Clementines can thus be considered a kind of counterforgery.

There may be a trace of Christian supercessionism in this passage as well, particularly in its polemic against Jewish animal sacrifice. The key text is the indication of why Moses allowed animal sacrifice in the first place—as a concession to the faulty religious leanings of his fellow Israelites who were not ready to abandon their pagan practices altogether:

> When meantime Moses, that faithful and wise steward, perceived that the vice of sacrificing to idols had been deeply ingrained into the people from their association with the Egyptians, and that the root of this evil could not be extracted from them, he allowed them indeed to sacrifice, but permitted it to be done only to God, that by any means he might cut off one half of the deeply ingrained evil, leaving the other half to be corrected by another, and at a future time. (Rec. 1.36)

When Christ came as the prophet predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy 18, he fulfilled what Moses anticipated, by substituting baptism for sacrifice. As Annette Reed has argued, this attack on the practice of Jewish sacrifice would have been completely moot at the time of the writing, since the Temple had already been destroyed and no sacrifices were being performed

in any event; moreover, the author is not maligning the religion of Moses but, as it were, affirming it. There is nothing "anti-Jewish" in the passage, to the extent that Jesus stands with Moses, not against him; Jews who have not accepted Christ are not condemned but are simply urged to change their minds: "the author's Christian supercessionism looks a lot like Jewish messianism."[84] In any event, this understanding that Jesus has superseded Moses at all stands at some tension with the rest of the *Recognitions* and the *Homilies*, as Reed has shown. But since the Christology, and the relationship of "Jews" and "Christians," is largely effected in nonpolemical terms through these two works, they are of less relevance to my present concerns.[85] In a broader sense, however, one could see the whole of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* as having a subtle but comparable polemical agenda:

> H(omilies) and R(ecognitions) appeal to the authority of this apostle [Peter] to promote an account of early church history that counters the epistles of Paul and the Book of Acts. Most notably, they exalt James and Peter as the true guardians of Jesus' message and the authentic leaders of the apostolic community, while condemning Paul and the law-free mission associated with him.[86]

Broader Polemic in the Pseudo-Clementines

Whereas *Recognitions* 1.27–71 has sometimes been seen as a counterforgery to the book of Acts, Annette Reed has argued that the *Homilies* taken as a whole can be seen as standing in direct tension with that other great historian of Christianity's first four centuries, Eusebius.[87] A broad comparison of Eusebius's ten-volume work with the twenty-book *Homilies* shows numerous parallels. They are practically contemporaneous, Eusebius from 290–312 CE, the *Homilies* from a few decades later. Eusebius wrote from Caesarea, the *Homilies* come from Syria. Many of their concerns are the same: tracing apostolic succession, establishing ecclesiastical authority, responding to pagan critiques, defending orthodoxy against heresy, and explaining the relationship of the Christian church to Judaism. In addition, both extensively use earlier source materials.

Reed compares the views of the two under a number of enlightening rubrics. Eusebius maintains that apostolic succession occurs in all of the main churches of the orthodox tradition through "the successions of the holy apostles" (*H.E.* 1.1); the *Homilies* are concerned only about the succession through the Jerusalem church, and specifically Peter (Hom. 2.6–12; 3.15, 19; 11.35), who passes along the teaching of the "true prophet." Eusebius claims that Christianity, though continuous with the religion of Abraham and those before him, is discontinuous with Judaism, basing his argument on Gen. 49:10, that a scepter would fall away from Judah, opening up the way for the "new" thing to arrive in Jesus (e.g. *H.E.* 1. 6. 1–8); the *Homilies* claim that Moses and Jesus are both to be identified with the true prophet (Hom. 2.16–17; 3.17–21) and that they represent a single teaching (Hom. 8.6–7). The incarnation was not needed because of the failure of the Jews, but in order to allow the message to go to the gentiles (Hom. 3.18.3–19.1). Eusebius asserts that the mission to Jews was destined to fail, leading to the mission to gentiles (e.g., 2.1.8); the *Homilies* insist that the mission to the Jews was unnecessary, since Jews can be saved by the teachings of Moses (Hom. 8.5–7). The mission is for the pagans alone. Eusebius maintains that orthodoxy precedes heresy, which is by nature derivative and impotent; the *Homilies*—in the teaching of the syzygies (Hom. 2.15–18)—claims that the false comes prior to the true, and that falsehood is far from impotent (as seen in the successes of "Simon"). For Eusebius, Christianity is a new "ethnos"; this obviously poses a problem, then, for Jewish converts (what are they, exactly?); the *Homilies* use the term *Jew* even for gentile followers of Jesus (Hom. 11.16).

In light of these contrasts, Reed postulates that Eusebius provides a "parade example" of what Amos Funkenstein has called "counter history": "the process by which another group's history and sources are appropriated and reworked in the service of contrasting aims."[88] As she notes, Eusebius draws extensively on Josephus and Philo to describe the failings of Judaism; moreover, he relies on Hegesippus, himself possibly a "Jewish Christian" to narrate the history of "Jewish Christianity." If this view of Eusebius is right, then the possibility further presents itself that "the *Homilies* was compiled, at least in part, to counter this counter-history." That is to say, with many of the same concerns as Eusebius, the *Homilies* spin the tale in precisely a contrary way. This involves not merely alluding to Paul "in order to exclude him," but also telling the entire story of the

Christian mission and message in a way that stands at odds with the "orthodox" historian. It is, then, a counterforgery in what I am calling the weak sense, a forgery designed to counter views found in another writing, in this case a writing that was destined to attain the status of orthodoxy and to determine how historians understood the development of the Christian church for many centuries to follow.

1. E.g., a fifth-century anti-Jewish account of the Jewish mistreatment of Jesus and the early Christians, preserved in one Syriac and one Armenian manuscript; the James Liturgy of the sixth century, preserved in eighth- and ninth-century Greek and Syriac manuscripts, instrumental in the separation of the Syrian "Miaphysites" from the catholics; and the report of John Chrysostom, preserved in one Sahidic manuscript of the tenth century, to have discovered an ancient book by James that described Jesus' ascent to the seventh heaven; on this last see E. A. W. Budge, "An Encomium on Saint John the Baptist," in *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), pp. 128–45, 335–51.

2. F. H. Kern, *Der Charakter und Ursprung des Briefs Jakobi* (Tübingen: Fues, 1835).

3. *The Letter of James*, AB 37A (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 7.

4. Ibid., p. 9.

5. Matt Jackson-McCabe, "The Politics of Pseudepigraphy and the Letter of James," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 621.

6. See pp. 242–47.

7. Contra J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), who argues that James would have known Greek. Sevenster's study has been superseded, indeed, demolished by the more recent investigations of M. Chancey, M. Bar Ilan, and C. Herzer mentioned in the previous chapter. And so, Lindemann, *Paulus*, is precisely wrong to maintain "The Greek of James is indeed the weakest argument against its authenticity" ("In der Tat ist die griechische Sprache des Jak das schwächste Argument gegen seine Echtheit," p. 241, n. 57). And when John Painter (*Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997) maintains that James *could* have been the author, since as a Galilean he would have been fluent in Greek, he is simply arguing on the basis of assertion, flying

in the face of the evidence; his further claim that we need to take into account "the educative effect of the Jesus tradition" fails to address the hard issues (p. 238). Training in Greek composition was not part of first-century catechism.

8. "Es [bleibt] gleichwohl fraglich … dass einem galiläischen Handwerkersohn das rhetorische und sprachliche Niveau des Jak zuzutrauen sei." "'Jakobus, der Gerechte': Erwägungen zur Verfasserfiktion des Jakobusbriefes," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 578.

9. "Selbst wenn man eine weite Verbreitung des Griechischen im Palästina des 1. Jh.s n. Chr. annimmt, wird man eine Abfassung des Jak durch den Herrenbruder selbst kaum für möglich halten, insbesondere, wenn man daneben das merklich einfachere Griechisch des Diasporajuden Paulus stellt." *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), p. 211.

0. Sometimes in discussions of authenticity, the letter's allusions to dominical traditions are brought into play, by advocates of both positions. But it should not be thought that the author's failure to quote his brother explicitly demonstrates that James did not write the book; one can imagine all sorts of reasons for the absence of direct quotations. At the same time, the many parallels with the sayings of Jesus do not demonstrate that the author was his brother. Most early Christians would have known the teachings of Jesus, and many of them would have been interested in replicating these sayings in their reflections on the ethical lives of Christians.

1. Cf. Matt 22:34–50; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14, where "love," not "works of the Law," fulfills the Law.

2. It is important to note that the use of the term *synagogue* to refer to the Christians' gathering does not indicate that the letter is either early or "Jewish," as shown, for example, by such texts as Ignatius *Polycarp* 4:2 ("let there be more frequent synagogues"), *Shepherd*, Commandments 11:9 ("the synagogue of upright men"), and Dionysius of Alexandria, according to Eusebius, *H.E*. 9.9.2, 7.11.11.

3. See pp. 218–22.

4. *Letter of James*, pp. 94–96.

5. See pp. 305–8.

6. Johnson, *Letter of James*, p. 249. Johnson bases his argument on two claims, that for James ἔργα are never connected to the law, and that the common elements in the two authors is just as easily explained as resulting from the fact that they were both first-generation of a messianic movement that had faith in Jesus as the messiah. This view is effectively refuted by Matt Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Freedom* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Among other things, Jackson-McCabe points out that there are simply too many verbal connections with Paul to be accidental (as I will show). Moreover, it is not true that ἔργα are not connected with the law in James—as seen most clearly in 1:25 and also in 2:1–13. (Below I argue that what Paul and James *mean* by ἔργα is different; but that is another matter.) Moreover, although it is true that typical discussions in ancient first-generation members of the Jesus messianic movement do tie "attitude and action" (faith and works), it is equally important to note that the terms used to *express* this important tie, outside of James and Paul, are never πίστις and ἔργα—let alone in connection to whether one can be considered "righteous" (using δικαιοῦσθαι) by faith apart from ἔργα.

7. Kari Syreeni, "James and the Pauline Legacy," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity*, ed. Ismo Dunderberg et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2002), p. 401.

8. "Der Abschnitt Jak 2, 21–24 berührt sich jedenfalls so eng mit Röm 3.4, daß eine literarische Beziehung doch zu vermuten ist." Andreas Lindemann, *Paulus*, p. 247. See also, among a large host, Wiard Popkes, "James and Scripture: An Exercise in Intertextuality," *NTS* 45 (1999): 213–29.

9. Thus James 3:13–18 is close to 1 Corinthians 2–3, down to the wording (genuine wisdom over against earthly psychic eagerness for quarrels). Among other phrases and ideas that appear Pauline are "Lord of glory" 2:1 (cf. 1 Cor. 2:8), the contrast of "desire and death" 1:13–15 (cf. Rom. 6:11–13, 23; 7:7ff), and God's preference for the poor (2:5; cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–28). Moreover, the climactic chain of conclusions in 1:2–3 is like Rom. 5:3–5 (and 1 Peter 1:6–7). On the other hand, Martin Hengel, "Der Jakobusbrief als antipaulinische Polemik," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the NT: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis*, ed. G. Hawthorne and Otto Betz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 248–78, is overly fanciful when he sees everything in the letter (esp. 3:1–12; 4:13–16; 5:13–16) as anti-Pauline.

0. “Jak behandelt nicht ein isoliertes theologisches Thema (in 2, 14–16), sondern schreibt auf dem Hintergrund der Entwicklung der (paulinischen) Missionskirchen. Möglicherweise gewann er sogar Zugang zu einigen paulinischen Kerntexten, evtl. freilich nicht auf direktem Weg, sondern durch mündliche oder schriftliche Vermittlung.” *Der Brief des Jakobus* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), p. 39.

1. Margaret Mitchell, “The Letter of James as a Document of Paulinism?” in *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James*, ed. Robert L. Webb and John S. Kloppenborg (London: T&T Clark, 2007), p. 75. I am not, however, persuaded by Mitchell’s rather eccentric attempt to show that the author of James was actually a later Paulinist trying to reconcile Paul (of Galatians) with Paul (of 1 Corinthians). In support she points to other later Paulinists such as 1 Clement and Polycarp, who make similar rhetorical moves to the same end. The difference, however, is stark. James states a Pauline theologoumenon and then argues against it so as directly to oppose a “Pauline” teaching. None of her other authorities does this.

2. “Paulus vertritt ja keineswegs den von Jak attackierten Glaubensbegriff.” Wilhelm Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), p. 214.

3. And so, I am obviously arguing against those who continue to read James through Lutheran eyes as standing in conflict with Paul himself, as for example, Lindemann, *Paulus in ältesten Christentum:* “James 2:14–26 in this regard must be understood as an explicit disagreement with Paul. James does not reject a ‘degenerate’ Paulinism … he simply rejects the assertion that humanity is justified by faith alone” (“Jak 2, 14–26 ist insofern zu verstehen als expliziter Widerspruch gegen Paulus. Jak wendet sich nicht gegen einen ‘entarteten’ Paulinismus … er wendet sich einfach gegen die Behauptung, daß der Mensch aus Glauben allein gerechtgesprochen werde,” p. 248). Lindemann does acknowledge that James’s “misreading” of Paul corresponds to what is found in post-Pauline authors who favored his teaching (Eph. 2:8–9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5–7; 1 Clem. 32:4; Pol. Phil. 1:3). But that is just the point. James is attacking a later understanding of Paul embodied in forged Pauline traditions by later Paulinists.

4. *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, tr. Michael W. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

5. David R. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2007).

6. Irenaeus does not directly quote James, but he does, like James, follow a quotation of Gen 15:6 with the comment that Abraham "was called a friend of God" *(Adv. Haer*. 4.16.2). Nienhuis discounts this evidence on the simple grounds that Abraham is called the "friend of God" in Jewish literature as well (p. 36). But the point is the quotation and the epithet are combined in precisely the same way in both James and Irenaeus. That is hard to imagine as a historical accident.

7. It is too easy for Nienhuis to claim that the author hid his anti-Marcionite agenda so as not to be guilty of anachronism; one could just as well argue that the author was anti-Valentinian, anti-Thomasine, or anti-Sethian.

8. Matthias Konradt, "Der Jakobusbrief als Brief des Jakobus," in Petra V. Gemünden et al., eds., *Der Jakobusbrief: Beiträge zur Rehabilitierung der 'strohernen Epistel'*" (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), pp. 16–53. Thus the parallels of James 1:2–3 with 1 Pet. 1:6–7 in particular show that the relationship was probably on the literary level

Πειρασμοὶ ποικίλοι. . . . τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως: "[begegnet man] in der gesamten antiken Literatur nur an den genannten beiden Stellen." Konradt, "Jakobus, der Gerechte: Erwägung zur Verfasserfiktion des Jakobusbriefes," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 579. Cf. also James 4:6–10 with 1 Pet. 5c–9 (both replace LXX κύριος with θεός) and James 1:18, 21 with 1 Pet. 1:22–2:2 (conversion as rebirth).

9. An issue raised, for example, in Jörg Frey, "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief," in Frey et al. eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 683–732.

0. J. Daryl Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993), p. 77. Charles goes astray only in trying to explain these similarities as deriving from the circumstance that the two authors were writing in the same Jewish Galilean milieu, as if both would have had similar training in Greek composition. Given what we have seen about literacy rates in rural Galilee, Frey "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild" is much more convincing in seeing in these linguistic parallels evidence for literary dependence.

1. Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief. Der 2 Petrusbrief* (Düsseldorf: Benzinger Verlag, 1994), p. 17.

2. For a list of scholars on both sides since 1880, see Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 1990), p. 174 n. 261. Bauckham himself makes a spirited defense for authenticity.

3. See, for example, Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, who instances Paul's usage in 2 Cor. 13:5 ("your faith"), and Gal 1:23 ("preaching the faith he once tried to destroy"). But neither reference means what Jude means by "the faith." The first is a reference to "your faith"—which is not a body of knowledge or truths to be confessed; the latter reference uses the term to refer to a group of believers who put their trust in Christ. Again, that is different from "the body of knowledge that we call the faith." Even Davids admits that the use of the term in Jude compares most favorably with the Pastorals.

4. On Jude as a "peasant," see p. 219, n. 54.

5. The unreflective claims of R. Bauckham notwithstanding (see Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, 50, Waco, TX: Word, 1983, pp. 6–16, esp. pp. 15–16). Writing literacy did not come from hearing others speak the language and picking up conversational Greek for oneself. It took substantial training in a school setting, requiring years of hard work. See pp. 242–47.

6. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 6.

7. *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude*, pp. 62–63.

8. So Bauckham, who argues that in two quotations (vv. 12, 13) the author bases his argument on wording found in Hebrew, not Greek, text; in three references to the OT (vv. 11, 12, 23) his vocabulary does not correspond to that of the LXX; p. 7. This assumes, of course, that the LXX text available to us today was a stable entity then as well.

9. So Bauckham, p. 7.

0. As I have repeatedly stated, becoming reading-literate in just one language took years and considerable resources; becoming writing-literate —at the level required to compose a book—took still more years. And that was in one's native tongue. To become writing-literate in a second language required intensive training. Where would Jude have found the time or resources to manage this training? It is true that his brother, Jesus, may have been extraordinary among his townspeople for learning to read (Hebrew), but that is a far cry from being able to compose a book in

Hebrew, let alone in Greek. And everything suggests that Jesus was the outstanding exception in the family. Anyone who suggests that a person like the historical Jude could have learned Greek composition simply by traveling the world as a missionary has not taken seriously the scholarship on ancient literacy and on the educational systems of antiquity. Contrast Bauckham: "if his [Jude's] missionary travels took him among strongly Hellenized Jews there is no reason why he should not have deliberately improved his command of Greek to increase his effectiveness as a preacher"; p. 15.

1. Frederik Wisse, "The Epistle of Jude."
2. Ibid., p. 136.
3. Gerhard Sellin, "Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes," *ZNW* 77 (1986): 206–25.
4. *Jude, 2 Peter*, pp. 11–13.
5. Sellin, "Die Häretiker," goes too far in thinking that the τοῦτο of Jude 4 ("this condemnation") is inexplicable as a reference to the judgment described in v. 15, since there it is κρίσις rather than κρίμα. In his view it is a cross-reference back to Rom. 3:8. But it is hardly conceivable that a reader would make that link rather than the other, especially since the two words can be used synonymously, and in 15 it is found in a quotation (it obviously is not referring to the judgment of v. 6, as that refers to the angels, or of v. 9, which is about Michael and the Devil; only vv. 4 and 15 refer to the judgment of humans).
6. Sellin, "Die Häretiker," p. 211, n. 17.
7. Ibid.; Jörg Frey, "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 683–732.
8. Sellin "Die Häretiker," argues that vv. 6–7 are part of the polemic against the opponents, but this is taking the case a step too far. These two verses indicate past instances of judgment against the disobedient, not charges against the false teachers.
9. "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild," p. 698. Sellin is too extreme in insisting that the entire polemic of the book involves the relationship to angels, as when he argues that "defiling the flesh" in v. 8 refers to humans and angels inappropriately entering into one another's spheres. That would be an odd meaning for "defiling the flesh," given the other language invoking

licentiousness. Rather, these opponents revile angels *and* carry the teaching of "grace" to an inappropriate extreme. One can imagine numerous possible connections between the two prongs of this attack. Are the opponents, for example, thought to despise all authority—angelic beings and moral codes?

0. "Es ist daher durchaus denkbar, dass eine Haltung, wie sie der Autor des Kol zur Sprache bringt, dem Verfasser des Jud als Leugnung der kosmologischen und eschatologischen Bedeutung der Engel und der durch sie repräsentierten Ordnung erscheinen." "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild," p. 700.

1. "Wohl … könnte es Verbindungslinien geben zwischen dem Verfasser des Kolosserbriefes, der gegen die Engel-Verehrer polemisiert, und den Häretikern des Judasbriefes. Aus Kol. 2, 18 geht ja hervor, daß Gesetzesvorschriften und Engeldienst einerseits, Antinomismus und Verachtung der Engel andererseits zusammengehören. So scheinen mir die Häretiker des Judasbriefes in einer paulinischen Tradition zu stehen, deren ältestes Zeugnis der Kolosserbrief darstellt." "Die Häretiker," p. 222.

2. As I have stressed, such an author would have had no way of knowing that the views of these Paulinists differed from the views of Paul, lacking, as he did, access to modern critical analyses of the Pauline corpus and the modern scholarly reconstruction of the "real" Paul.

3. And so Frey's conclusion is apt: "The choice of pseudonym in this regard does not serve to legitimatize the text and its content, or serves only in a very limited way; it serves primarily the assignation [of the text] to a particular line of tradition that is characterized by the figure of James and is represented by the Epistle of James, and that takes a critical stance against various developments in the Pauline-Deutero-Pauline tradition." ("Die Wahl dieses Pseudonyms dient insofern nicht oder nur sehr wenig der Legitimation des Schreibens und seines Inhalts, sondern primär der Zuordnung zu einer Traditionslinie, die durch die Gestalt des Jakobus markiert und durch den Jakobusbrief repräsentiert ist und verschiedenartigen Entwicklungen in der paulinisch-deuteropaulinischen Tradition kritisch gegenübertritt.") "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild," p. 702.

4. All translations are from Johannes Irmscher and Georg Strecker, "The Pseudo-Clementines," trans. R. McL. Wilson, in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992).

5. For a recent statement of other opinions, see Graham Stanton, "Jewish Christian Elements in the Pseudo-Clementine Writings," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), pp. 305–24.

6. Translation of Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, p. 23.

7. See Pierluigi Piovanelli, "'L'Ennemi est parmi Nous': Présences rhétoriques et narratives de Paul dans les Pseudo-Clémentines et autres écrits apparentés," in *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines—Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance: Actes du deuxième colloque international sur la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, Lausanne—Genève, 30 août—2 septembre 2006*, Frédéric Amsler et al., eds. (Prahins, Switzerland: Éditions du Zèbre, 2008). I am obliged to Maria Doefler for this reference.

8. See Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter-history? The Apostolic Past in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), p. 177, n. 17.

9. W. Ullmann, "Some Remarks on the Significance of the *Epistola Clementis* in the Pseudo-Clementines," *StPatr* 4 (1961): 332.

0. All translations are from Johannes Irmscher and Georg Strecker, "The Pseudo-Clementines," in Schneemelcher, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*.

1. The tradition that Peter personally ordained Clement as bishop of the Roman church, directly after himself, without intermediating bishops, is also found in Tertullian, *Prescription*, 32.

2. Ullmann's view ("Significance," pp. 296–98) that the view of Clement's ordination derived from a careful reading of Irenaeus is flawed. On one hand, the tradition is also in Tertullian (see n. 61). Moreover, Ullmann's exegesis of *Adv. Haer*. 3.3.2–3 involves overreading: both Peter and Paul "hand over" the bishopric of Rome to Linus. Is that really categorically different from Clement, who was "called" to the position? It appears, instead, that Irenaeus is working to show the transitions of Roman leadership in such a way as to smooth over the stormy differences between Peter and Paul, which otherwise affected various factions within the Roman community.

3. The *Homilies* are usually dated to 300–320, and survive in their original Greek; the *Recognitions* are dated to 360–380 but survive only in the Latin

translation of Rufinus. For the texts see Bernhard Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen: I Homilien*, ed. J. Irmischer (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953; 2nd ed., ed. F. Paschke, 1965; 3rd ed., ed. G. Strecker, 1994); Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen II Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung*, ed. F. Paschke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1965; 2nd ed., ed. G. Strecker, 1994).

4. For histories of research, see F. Stanley Jones, "The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research," *Second Century* 2 (1982): 1–33, 63–96; and F. Amsler, "État de la recherché récente sur le roman pseudo-clémentin," in F. Amsler et al., eds., *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines—Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romances* (Lausanne: Éditions de Zèbre, 2008), pp. 25–45. A useful general overview can be found in Graham Stanton, "Jewish Christian Elements in the Pseudo-Clementine Writings," in Skarsaune and Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, pp. 305–24. A fuller introduction is F. Stanley Jones, "Introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in Jones, ed., *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque inter Judaeochristiana: Collected Studies* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 203, Leuven: Peeters, in press).

5. So Han J. W. Drijvers, "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," in Drijvers, "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte*, FS Carsten Colpe, ed. Christoph Elsas and Hans Kippenberg (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1990), pp. 314–23. More recently, with a different spin, see F. Stanley Jones, "Marcionism in the Pseudo-Clementines," *Poussières de christianisme et de judaïsme antiques*, ed. A. Frey and R. Gounelle (Prahins: Editions du Zèbre, 2007), pp. 225–44. It is a mistake to conclude, however, that since the work was anti-Marcionite, it could not also be Jewish-Christian, as Drijvers avers. See F. Stanley Jones, "Jewish Christianity of the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in *Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics*,' ed. Antti Marjanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 315–34.

6. See especially F. Stanley Jones, "An Ancient Jewish Christian Rejoinder to Luke's Acts of the Apostles: Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.27–71," *Semeia* 80 (1997): 223–45; and his fuller study, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity Pseudo-Clementine "Recognitions" 1.27–71*, SBLTT 37, Christian Apocrypha Series 2 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995).

7. Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines: Situating the Recognitions in Fourth Century Syria*

(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); and Kelley, "Problems of Knowledge and Authority in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance of *Recognitions*" *JECS* 13 (2005): 315–48; Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways': Approaches to Historiography and Self-Definition in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 189–231; Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter-history?" pp. 173–216; and Reed, "Heresiology and the (Jewish-)Christian Novel: Narrativized Polemics in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 273–98.

8. M. J. Edwards, "The *Clementina*: A Christian Response to the Pagan Novel," *CQ* 42 (1992), p. 462; Dominique Côté, "La fonction littéraire de Simon le magician dans les Pseudo-Clémentines," *LTP* 57 (2001): 513–23.

9. See pp. 318–20.

0. All quotations of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* are taken from Thomas Smith, "Pseudo-Clementine Literature," *ANF*, vol. 8.

1. Even in Acts, although Peter is the first to convert a gentile (Acts 8), it is Paul who first engages in a sustained gentile mission.

2. Although even here Simon cannot be seen as "Paul without remainder." Peter goes on to describe Simon in the following chapter, and to discuss his history; clearly he is not thinking directly of Paul here.

3. "Jewish Christian Elements," p. 315.

4. Ibid., p. 316.

5. For a sense of the range of issues, see the most recent collection of essays, *The Pseudo-Clementines*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer (Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

6. See especially Jones, *An Ancient-Jewish Christian Source*; and Jones, "An Ancient Jewish-Christian Rejoinder."

7. See Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways.'"

8. "Anti-Paulinism in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity*, ed. G. Lüdemann and Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), pp. 169–94; see esp. p. 183.

9. See note 66.

0. "Jewish-Christian Rejoinder," p. 243.

1. Stanton, "Jewish Christian Elements," p. 318.

2. Jones's claims that the source attempts to write a "better history" than Acts is convincing only to the extent that any alternative account tries to do better than the one that it is opposing. But the specific arguments that he uses are for the most part unpersuasive. For example, the claim that the source focuses on only one encounter between the apostles and the Jewish leaders shows that it "has definitely provided a better arranged and more vivid account" (*Ancient Jewish Christian Source*, p. 241) rests on subjective evaluations of plot and structure. One need always ask: Better for whom? And on what grounds?
3. "Jewish Christian Elements," p. 322.
4. "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways,'" pp. 212–13.
5. For exposition of key passages, see Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the Parting of the Ways.'" For the Jewish Christian elements of the Pseudo-Clementines more broadly, see most recently F. Stanley Jones, "The Jewish Christianity of the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics,'* ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 315–34.
6. Reed, "Jewish Christianity after the 'Parting of the Ways,'" p. 198.
7. Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter-history?" pp. 173–216.
8. Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter History," pp. 212–13, with reference to Amos Funkelstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 36–49.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Anti-Jewish Forgeries

Many of the writings that we considered in the previous chapter attacked Paul while advancing a contrary understanding of the Christian gospel that can be called, despite all the term's well-known problems, "Jewish-Christian." The predominant tendency among our surviving sources, however, both forged and orthonymous, lies in the opposite direction. Indeed, attacks on Jews as people and on Judaism as a religion quickly became de rigueur in most of the Christian circles we have close familiarity with from the literary record. The history of Christian anti-Judaism is complex, but inordinately well documented, and I do not need to trace even its broad lines here.[1] The rise of anti-Jewish sentiment within a range of Christian communities—proto-orthodox and heterodox—led, as one might expect, to the production of forgeries that, under the name of authoritative figures, castigated Jews and the religion they practiced.[2] In this chapter we will consider a number of these works, starting with one of the great archaeological discoveries of texts in modern times, the Gospel of Peter.

THE GOSPEL OF PETER

For centuries the best-known account of a Gospel of Peter came in Eusebius' description of its encounter and exposure by Serapion, bishop of Antioch at the very end of the second century. Eusebius includes in his report a lengthy but frustratingly partial citation of Serapion's own pamphlet dealing with the matter. Serapion first heard of the Gospel of Peter while making his episcopal rounds in the village of Rhossus. Learning that the church there used Peter's Gospel, but not perusing it for himself, he deemed it acceptable for use. Only later was he informed that the book had been propagated by a group of Docetists. After examining it, Serapion decided that it was for the most part orthodox; but it contained certain "additions" to the Gospel story that he considered spurious and dangerous. On these grounds he forbade future use of the book, appending to his

account a list of the offensive passages. It is much to be regretted that Eusebius chose not to cite this appendix, as we are, as a result, unable to determine for certain if the fragmentary Gospel of Peter discovered in 1886–87 is in fact the one Serapion considered objectionable. But there are good reasons for assuming that it is, as we will see.

First, however, it is important to note that Justin Martyr, some fifty years before Serapion, also gives evidence of knowing the Gospel of Peter, in a much-controverted passage in his Dialogue with Trypho. On fifteen occasions throughout his writings, Justin refers to the Gospels by calling them the ἀπομνημονεύματα the "Memoirs." In most instances he explains that these are specifically the "memoirs of the apostles," and in one case he makes it quite clear that he is referring to literary productions, Gospels, produced by apostles: οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια (I *Apol*. 66.3). On the one occasion we are most interested in, however, he refers one set of Memoirs to a specific apostle:

> Καὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν μετωνομακέναι αὐτὸν Πέτρον ἕνα τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ γεγράφθαι ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ γεγενημένον καὶ τοῦτο, μετὰ τοῦ καὶ ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφοὺς, υἱοῦς Ζεβεδαίου ὄντας, ἐπωνομακέναι ὀνόματι τοῦ Βοανεργές, ὅ ἐστιν υἱοῖ βροντῆς. . . . (*Dial.* 106.3)
>
> And when it says that he changed the name of one of the apostles to Peter, and when also this is written in his Memoirs, that he changed the name of … the sons of Zebedee to Boanerges, which is "sons of thunder.…"

Scholars such as Hilgenfeld and Harnack maintained that the reference should be read in the most straightforward sense, so that the possessive pronoun "his" refers to its nearest antecedent, "Peter," making this the earliest reference to the existence of the Gospel of Peter.[3] Naysayers have taken a variety of positions, some arguing that "his" refers to Jesus, so that the αὐτοῦ is some kind of objective genitive, or that it refers specifically to the Gospel thought by Papias to be Peter's version of the Gospel, that is, the Gospel of Mark—thus, most emphatically, Claus-Jürgen Thornton, in an article that is more learned than compelling.[4]

Against the passage referring to the Gospel of (= about) Jesus is, to begin with, a simple question of grammar, overlooked by such advocates of the view as Paul Foster, in his recent full-length commentary.[5] Objective genitives occur with nouns of action (love, hate, vision, and so on). A "memoir" (like a "book") does not seem to qualify; Foster, at least, provides nothing analogous. But what is more, how can a personal pronoun in the genitive be an objective genitive? "His book" or "his writing" or "his anything" surely indicates possession (the one who owns it) or derivation (the one who created it). Yet more significant, we have the other uses throughout Justin's writings, where "Memoirs of the Apostles," clearly refers to the books that the apostles wrote, as explicated in the reference cited above of 1 *Apol*. 66.3. That is to say, the genitive following ἀπομνημονεύματα is consistently a genitive of source or origin. Is there any compelling reason, apart from a general unwillingness to see this as a reference to the Gospel of Peter, not to take it this way here?[6]

On the contrary, a compelling case for reading it this way has been made by P. Pilhofer. In particular Pilhofer is opposed to the idea that Peter's "Memoirs" could be a reference to the Gospel of Mark. Taking it this way presupposes knowledge of Papias, whom Justin never mentions, even though he may be front-and-center in the minds of modern scholars thinking about the Gospel of Mark in relation to Peter. But there are positive reasons for thinking that Justin has the Gospel of Peter in mind, that Justin has, in fact, been influenced elsewhere by the accounts distinctive to it. As Pilhofer points out, where Justin's comments on the life of Jesus overlap with the surviving narrative in the Akhmim fragment of the Gospel of Peter, he appears to rely on it in substance. For example, the guilt of the Jews in the death of Jesus–they are the ones who actually kill him—is the same in both (e.g., *Dial*. 85.2 "who suffered and was crucified by your people under Pontius Pilate"; cf. *GPet*. 5–10); and in both accounts the disciples are said to have fled after Jesus' crucifixion (*Dial*. 53.5; cf. *GPet*. 26, 59), unlike in the New Testament Gospels.

Two specific passages especially merit attention. According to 1 Apol. 35.6, it is the Jews, not the Roman soldiers, who mock Jesus (thus also *GPet*. 5–10, but not the Gospels of the New Testament);[7] and in *Dial*. 97.3, when Jesus' clothes are divided, the phrase used is λαχμὸν βάλλοντες, a phrase that never occurs in Greek literature before Justin, with one exception: *Gospel of Peter* 12, καὶ λαχμὸν ἔβαλον. Confronted with these

similarities, Foster asks which direction the dependence was more likely to go, from the Gospel of Peter to Justin or the other way around. He opts for the latter option, but how can that be the better alternative? Which would be more likely, that a Gospel writer would comb through the lengthy, discursive writings of an apologist in order to ferret out isolated and scattered dominical traditions to include in his Gospel account, or that an apologist would rely on a Gospel text for his occasional references to the life of Jesus? Surely it is the latter. And we need constantly to recall that after referring to Peter in *Dial*. 106.3, Justin does refer to "his Memoirs."[8] This point has been recently reemphasized by Katharina Greschat, an advocate for Pilhofer's view, who provides additional supporting evidence.[9]

The reason Justin's witness matters is, in part, that it provides a *terminus ante quem* for the Gospel of Peter as the first half of the second century, when it was already in circulation and known in Rome, and in fact accepted by a prominent proto-orthodox teacher there as a scriptural authority. This conclusion also shows, as a sidelight, that whether or not Justin used a Gospel harmony, as Bell-inzoni and others have argued, he also used separate Gospels.[10]

The discovery of the Akhmim fragment of the Gospel of Peter by a French archaeological team in the 1886–87 season caused a wide stir, and raised a number of immediate questions. The first was whether this fragment was part of the Gospel known to Serapion. Generally scholars thought the answer was yes. But this raised the question of the alleged docetism of the text, with some scholars finding traces of a docetic Christology in the comment that when crucified, Jesus "was silent as if he felt no pain" (v. 10), in his cry from the cross "My power, O power, you have left me" (v. 19), in the note that he was then "taken up" (while his body was still obviously on the cross; v. 19), and in the very un-humanlike appearance of his body, tall as a mountain, after the resurrection (v. 40). In the resurgence of interest in the Gospel in more recent decades, however, some scholars have argued that a docetic view was more often being read into the text rather than out of it, and that as a consequence there is no compelling reason to see this book as the one known to Serapion.[11] In response it might be pointed out that Serapion indicated that parts of the Gospel were perfectly orthodox and others could be read heretically, and that is certainly true of the fragment that we have. Finally, scholars were obsessed with the relation of this Gospel to the canonical four: Did it use

them? Was it independent of them? Or, as in the famous but rather uninfluential proposal of J. D. Crossan, was the Gospel based on an earlier account, the Cross Gospel, a now-lost source of the canonical versions that is better represented in Peter than in any of them?[12]

All of these concerns are fueled more by an interest in seeing how the Gospel relates to external factors (Serapion, docetism, the canonical Gospels) than by a concern with what we find within the Gospel itself. Two features of the Gospel are significant for my present purposes: it makes a clear, but false, authorial claim; and its narrative is driven, in no small measure, by a polemical agenda of showing that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus.

The Pseudepigraphic Claim

No one doubts that the account is forged. Whereas most of the narrative is given in the third person, things change in vv. 26–27:

> But I and my companions were grieving and went into hiding, wounded in heart. For we were being sought out by them as if we were evildoers who wanted to burn the Temple. While these things were happening, we fasted and sat mourning and weeping, night and day, until the Sabbath.[13]

The author, then, was allegedly one of the disciples. It is at the very end that we learn which one he is: "But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went off to the sea. And with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord …" (v. 60). And that is where the text breaks off, in the middle of a sentence. We are fortunate that it did not break off a verse earlier: we would never have known which of the Twelve this author was claiming to be.

With very few exceptions most scholars date the account to sometime in the (early) second century.[14] Most important for our purposes, unlike the anonymous earlier Gospels that came to be included in the canon, this one is written by an author making a false self-identification. It is a forgery in the name of Simon Peter.

The Anti-Jewish Agenda

One of the Gospel of Peter's distinctive emphases is evident at the outset of the surviving fragment: "… but none of the Jews washed his hands, nor did Herod or any of his judges.[15] Since they did not wish to wash, Pilate stood up. Then King Herod ordered the Lord to be taken away and said to them, 'Do everything that I ordered you to do to him.'"

The fragment begins in the middle of the scene of the hand-washing at Jesus' trial. Pilate is not explicitly said to have washed his hands, but that is clearly what has happened in the preceding lines that are now lost. Unlike the Matthean parallel, however, here the emphasis is on what "the Jews"—Herod, the Jewish king, and his Jewish judges—specifically refuse to do. They are the ones, not Pilate, responsible for Jesus' death. Indeed, in the next line we learn that it is the Jewish king Herod, not the Roman governor, who orders Jesus' execution.

It is not just the Jewish leaders (King Herod and his judges) who are maligned for their role in the crucifixion: "none of the Jews" washed his hands. The emphasis continues throughout the account. Herod delivers Jesus "over to the people" (τῷ λαῷ) for punishment (v. 5), and they, the Jewish people, are the ones who mock and then crucify him:

> Those who took the Lord began pushing him about, running up to him and saying, "Let us drag around the Son of God, since we have authority over him." They clothed him in purple and sat him on the judgment seat, saying, "Give a righteous judgment, O King of Israel!" One of them brought a crown made of thorns and placed it on the Lord's head. Others standing there were spitting in his face; some slapped his cheeks; others were beating him with a reed; and some began to flog him, saying, "This is how we should honor the Son of God." They brought forward two evildoers and crucified the Lord between them. (vv. 6–10)

The author is not hesitant to lambaste the Jews for what they have done: "Thus they brought all things to fulfillment and completed all their sins on their heads" (v. 17). Later they realize just how evilly they have behaved and foresee the divinely ordained punishment. Jerusalem will now be

destroyed by God as a result: “Then the Jews, the elders, and the priests realized how much evil they had done to themselves and began beating their breasts, saying ‘Woe to us because of our sins. The judgment and the end of Jerusalem are near’” (v. 25).

But this does not stop them from doing yet more mischief. The disciples of Jesus are forced to go into hiding because the Jews are trying to track them down “as if we were evildoers who wanted to burn the Temple” (v. 26). Too late do the Jewish people realize that they have put an innocent man to death: after the clear signs given at his death, they bemoan what they have done, although they are not said to repent: “If such great signs happened when he died, you can see how righteous he was!” (v. 28). Then the Jewish leaders accompany the Roman guards to watch the tomb, and with them observe Jesus raised from the dead, and go in to tell Pilate:

> Greatly agitated, they said, “He actually was the Son of God.” Pilate replied, “I am clean of the blood of the Son of God; you decided to do this.” Then everyone approached him to ask and urge him to order the centurion and the soldiers to say nothing about what they had seen. “For it is better,” they said, “for us to incur a great sin before God than to fall into the hands of the Jewish people and be stoned.” And so Pilate ordered the centurion and the soldiers not to say a word. (vv. 45–49)

Rather than convert, they arrange a cover-up. And at the end they are still to be feared, as the women going to the tomb realize: “Now Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord, had been afraid of the Jews, since they were inflamed with anger” (v. 50).

One feature of the text worth noting is that even though the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people are so obviously painted as the culprits in the death of Jesus and its aftermath, the disciples of Jesus are themselves concerned to keep the Jewish Law, rigorously. And so they appear to observe the Sabbath day (v. 27) and to have kept the feast of unleavened bread (v. 58). Why, in an anti-Jewish text, are Jesus’ followers portrayed as pious Jews?

One might suspect that this is a case of historical verisimilitude. But it is also possible that Jesus’ followers are to be understood to be the “true”

Jews, the ones who really do perform God's will, as opposed to those who call themselves Jews but are opposed to it. This possibility relates to some of the ironies embedded in the narrative, which call to mind those highlighted in another anti-Jewish account, the Gospel of John. The most obvious irony in the Gospel of Peter's crucifixion scene is the fear, expressed twice, that Jesus' body needs to be removed from the cross before the Sabbath, so as not to violate the Jewish Law. For this account, Jews who have just killed the messiah of God are concerned not to break the Law. This is reminiscent of the irony of the Fourth Gospel, where at Jesus' trial the Jewish leaders refuse to enter the Praetorium because they want to be ritually pure in order to eat the Passover meal that evening (John 18:28), not realizing that it is precisely the Passover Lamb they are about to slay in their execution of Jesus.

Other ironies abound in the Gospel of Peter's brief narrative. The Jewish people who revile Jesus think they have authority over him, not realizing that he is the Lord (v. 6); they mockingly call him the King of Israel and demand a judgment, when in fact they will be judged for what they have done to him (vv. 7, 25); they crown him, slap him, beat him, and flog him, since that is their way of honoring the Son of God, who will return the favor when it comes time to destroy Jerusalem (v. 25). All these ironies heighten the heinous behavior not just of the Jewish leaders but also of the Jewish λαός.

What then is the function of the anti-Judaism in the text? Some scholars have argued that the attacks are directed against the Jewish leaders but not the Jewish people. And so J. D. Crossan can argue that "The Gospel of Peter is … more 'anti-Jewish' with regard to the authorities than any of the canonical gospels but also more 'pro-Jewish' with regard to the *people* than any of them."[16] But it is extremely difficult to see how this can be read out of a text that accuses the Jewish people of crucifying Jesus. Denker similarly sees the account as pinning the blame for the cover-up of the resurrection on the Jewish leaders (that part is true) in order to win Jews over to the Christian message,[17] a view similar to A. Kirk's that the blame on the Jewish leaders would lead Jewish people to reject them in favor of the church.[18] Neither of these views can explain why the Jews as a people are so harshly treated in the text. T. Nicklas argues that the author wanted to stress that Jews were fulfilling Scripture in their rejection of Jesus, but that

once they realize what their leaders have done in hiding the message of the resurrection, they would be more inclined to convert.[19]

J. Verheyden critiques all these views, and argues that the Gospel of Peter is not promoting any particular agenda when it portrays the Jews as guilty in the death of Jesus. The author instead is simply recounting, unreflectively, the traditions about Jesus' death as they have come down to him. Had he wanted to pin significant blame on the Jews, he would have been more explicit in his denunciation, rather than stating Jewish involvement in a rather banal and matter-of-fact manner. In Verheyden's view, the author of the Gospel of Peter

> has no great design or theologically profound message to offer. His agenda is far more modest. He tells a story that was known to all, and he does this in a way that appeals to an audience that was probably as little concerned with doctrine as it was eager for being confirmed in its opinions and prejudices about those who it was convinced had murdered Jesus.[20]

In my view this is taking the matter too far. As seen above, the account is permeated with anti-Jewish comments from beginning to end. The Roman governor Pilate is exculpated for the death of Jesus; it is the Jews who are responsible. And not just the Jewish leaders, but the Jewish people. Even if this is simply how the author "knows" the story—Verheyden's view—he has learned it as it has been passed through a virulently anti-Jewish matrix, far more virulent than even what we find in the New Testament. The Jews killed Jesus, and God will now destroy Jerusalem in punishment. And even though Jews realize with horror what they have done and the fate that now is to befall them, not one of them repents.

To return to our question, how are we to account for such vitriol against the Jews? Why need we look any farther than the rising tension with and hatred of Jews among (some) Christians of the second century? This was a century that saw the appearance of the epistle of Barnabas with its audacious claim that Jews have always misunderstood their own religion and that the Old Testament is a Christian, not a Jewish, book; a century that saw the rise of the Christian *adversus Ioudaeos* literature with such authors as Justin and, soon thereafter, Tertullian; a century that saw the most

heinous charges of deicide leveled against the Jews in the Paschal Homily of Melito. And we will see similar charges to those leveled against Jews in the Gospel of Peter in yet other passion narratives of still later times, when we come to the Pilate literature.

For now, we might conclude by returning to the issue of forgery. Given the anti-Jewish element of the book, why did its author decide to call himself Peter? The question is easier to ask than answer; in no small measure we are handicapped by the size of the small fragment of the text that survives. Any assessment of its authorial claim would necessarily depend on what could be found in the rest of the now-lost materials. But even with what little we have, one can think of reasons for an unknown author of such a second-century account to claim to be Peter. On one hand, the mere claim lends credibility to this version of the story and thereby assures a wider readership. But even beyond this, is it an accident that this, the most anti-Jewish of our early Gospels, is placed on the pen of an apostle who was thought to insist most strongly on the Jewish character of the gospel, and to have been a missionary specifically to Jews?

Peter became a battleground over which the Jewishness of Christianity was fought. In the Pseudo-Clementine literature he is portrayed as a proponent of a form of Christianity that adhered to the Law of Moses (see, e.g., the *Epistula Petri*). In the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, he avers that Jews who follow Moses are on a soteriological par with gentiles who follow Jesus. In these lengthy romances, Judaism is affirmed and Jews are praised, by Peter, the head disciple and foundation of the Christian church. But not in the Gospel of Peter. Here Jews are enemies of God who crucify their own messiah; their leaders hide the truth of Jesus' resurrection and persecute Jesus' disciples. At the end of the day, both sets of writings—the Pseudo-Clementines and the Gospel of Peter—use Peter, the Jewish follower of Jesus and well-known evangelist among the Jews, to set forth their visions of the message of Jesus in relationship to Judaism. In the Gospel the portrayal is hateful: Jews are responsible for executing Jesus and God will exact on them a penalty.

THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH

The Ascension of Isaiah is unusual in being a Christian apocalyptic text written about, and partially in the name of, a great prophet of the Old

Testament. The book is clearly divided into two parts. The first five chapters describe the Martrydom of Isaiah under the wicked Israelite king Manasseh at the instigation of the false prophet Belchira, who is empowered by Beliar. These chapters include a description of Isaiah's prophecy of the coming and reception of Christ on earth, and the apostasy that will follow his ascension. The latter is the one major event between the departure of the "Beloved," the book's favored epithet for Christ, and the apocalyptic end. This opening section of the book ends with Isaiah's death, as he is sawn in half with a "treesaw."

Chapters 6 through 11 recount an earlier vision of Isaiah, in which he ascends through the seven heavens, observing the angelic hosts at each level, until he reaches the highest heaven, the realm of God himself, whence he observes the descent and reascent of the Beloved through the realms below, assuming a different angelic form on his descent so as not to be recognized en route, and providing, as required, the proper passwords to be allowed passage. There follows a description of the incarnation and crucifixion, and then the Beloved's reascent in glory.

Scholarship on this apocalypse has long been obsessed with theories of sources.[21] As Richard Bauckham notes in his concise history of research, since W. Gesenius in 1821, most scholars have agreed that the Ascension of Isaiah is not the unified work of a single author.[22] For much of the second half of the twentieth century the theory of R. H. Charles held sway, that the book comprises three earlier sources, a Jewish Martyrdom of Isaiah, edited by a Christian (much of chs. 1–5), a Testament of Hezekiah (3:13b–4:18), and the Vision of the book's final six chapters. In 1973 A. Caquot tried to isolate the Jewish source behind the Martyrdom, but all such attempts—along with the idea of any such independent source at all—were destroyed by the work of Mauro Pesce, who showed that the Martyrdom is not a Christianized version of a Jewish source, but a Christian text through and through, based in part on Jewish haggadic traditions.[23] Pesce's view is now widely held. The Martyrdom is so obviously and thoroughly Christianized that it is difficult to remove Christian elements to obtain a Jewish core. It is filled with references to the Beloved, for example, and there are traces of an incipient trinitarianism, as in 1.7: "the Beloved of my Lord and the Spirit that speaks in me."

E. Norelli has argued at length that chapters 1–5 are a coherent and unified work by a single author, with a central theme involving the conflict between true and false prophecy. In addition, he maintains that the Vision of chapters 6–11 is an earlier composition that had circulated independently, which was later joined to the Martyrdom by the author of the latter, who composed 11.41–43 to bind the two parts together. The two major portions of the work, then, reflect different phases of the history of the community of prophets from which they emerged.[24]

Bauckham wants to take the matter a step further still. In his judgment the entire Ascension is the single composition of a solitary first-century Christian author who used the book of Daniel as his generic model, with its opening narrative only loosely connected with the visions in the second half of the book. This view, however, may propose an implausibly early date for the final product of the Ascension. There is nothing in Christian literature of the first century analogous to the descent and reascent of the Beloved through the seven heavens, using passwords as necessary to pass through the realms controlled by others.

Jonathan Knight places the final text after the apostolic age, given comments made in 3.21–31, but before "full-blown Gnosticism," since the Vision evinces parallels with Gnostic thought yet lacks Gnostic cosmology such as is known from the writings of the Nag Hammadi library that date from the midsecond century. Here too, however, one should be wary of placing too much emphasis on a unilinear ideological development among texts, as if Gnostic writings written after 150 CE necessarily evidence developed cosmogonic myths. As we will see, the early to middle second century provides a plausible date for the Ascension. Certainly no detailed account of a divine being's ascent and descent through the layers of the heavens—replete with passwords—can be found earlier.

The Pseudepigraphic Character of the Book

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the Ascension of Isaiah is a textbook example of "embedded pseudepigraphy." The book as a whole does not claim to be written by Isaiah, but periodically through the course of its narrative "Isaiah" inserts himself to describe his own history and vision. And so the narrative begins in the third person and continues that way up to 3.30 ("for each will say what seems pleasing in his own eyes"[25]) and then

suddenly, without explanation, moves into the first person in 3.31 ("And they will set aside the prophecies of the prophets which were before me and also pay no attention to these my visions …"). The narrative continues in the first person (see 4.1, 13, 20) before returning to the third person in 5.1. So too in the Vision, chapter 6 describes Isaiah entering into a trance in the third person, but Isaiah himself begins to narrate his vision in the first person starting in 7.2 ("In that moment when I was prophesying according to things heard by you, I saw a sublime angel …"). So too at the end, there is an abrupt shift from first to third person, at 11.35–36 ("'This have I seen.' And Isaiah told it to all who stood before him …"). Thus the author of the book often removes himself from consideration and feigns the identity of Isaiah himself. It should not be argued that this is simply the generic device of apocalypses and so should not be taken seriously as an authorial claim. As I showed in an earlier chapter, pseudepigraphy is indeed a regular feature of both Jewish and Christian apocalypses, but the authorial claims were meant to be believed and trusted. Whoever wrote the book of Daniel in the second century BCE meant his readers to take seriously his claim to be the wise man and prophet of four hundred years earlier; otherwise his "predictions" would have carried no probative force. These books were not written under innocent pseudonyms, but were forged.[26]

We should also guard against thinking that the goal of forgers of apocalypses was the same in every case. Each apocalypse pursues its own agenda and the authorial question needs always to be pursued in that light. In some apocalypses the function of the authorial claim makes particular sense, when, for example, the seer foretells what will happen in the future even though he is, in fact, relating what had already happened in the past, thereby verifying his "vision" for his reader. But that is not the case with the Ascension of Isaiah, which is not concerned to relate the course of human history through a variety of maleficent kingdoms aligned against God (contrast Daniel). And so how might we explain the authorial function here?

Knight provides one explanation worth considering.[27] In his judgment, the book is principally about the defeat of Beliar by Christ, and is written to provide hope for Christians who are undergoing persecution in the early second century. For this author the end is near and the persecuting powers will soon be overthrown. In other words, this apocalypse and its authorial claim function in a way similar to the canonical apocalypses of Daniel and

Revelation. Knight's view, however, may rely too much on his understanding of how apocalypses work in general; there is less to commend it from the specifics provided by this text in particular. Persecution may be part of the picture, in that the deaths of both Jesus and Isaiah figure prominently. But it is certainly not the entire picture. The bigger picture involves the revelation of heavenly secrets that make sense of earthly realities, and not just the realities of suffering. Also at stake are the reality of the incarnation, the hidden identity of Jesus, his rejection on earth, and the apostasy that arose in the wake of his departure. At its heart, this apocalypse is deeply concerned with theology.

The Theological Dimensions of the Text

The theological views of the text have long puzzled interpreters. Its view of Christ is often described as "naïvely docetic," in that Christ is said to have come to earth in the "likeness" of a human, after transforming his appearance at will through the heavenly realms (3.13). He was born after Mary was pregnant for just two months (11.13); and he nursed not because he needed nourishment but simply to avoid being recognized for who he really was (11.17). Darrell Hannah has shown, however, that the account is not thoroughly docetic. Christ really suffers torment, is crucified, and dies, before being raised from the dead.[28]

So too the account is clearly Trinitarian but not especially nuanced: "And there they all named the primal Father and his Beloved, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, all with one voice" (8.18). Moreover, both the Beloved and the Holy Spirit are worshiped (9.40). At the same time they flank the throne of God, presumably as subordinates, and only the Holy Spirit, not the Beloved, is described as an angel (9.40). Instead, the Beloved assumes the appearance of an angel only as it suits his purposes during his descent. In Hannah's convincing explication, the account is not theologically rigorous, written to promote a refined theological perspective. Nor is it naïvely docetic. It is simply theologically naïve.[29]

One aspect of the theology of the book that merits particular attention is its relationship to Johannine theology known from the writings of the New Testament, with which it shares many features—both with the Gospel of John, where Isaiah is said to have seen the glories of heaven (John 12:41),

and with the book of Revelation, where another seer is granted a vision of the divine realm. At the same time the author of the Ascension stands at clear odds with some of the views of the Fourth Gospel. John maintains that no one has ascended to heaven except the one who has previously descended, that is Christ, the Son of Man (John 3:13). Not so for the Ascension, where the prophet of old ascended to the highest realm. Moreover, according to John, Isaiah had a vision of the pre-incarnate Christ in the realm of glory (12:41), since indeed, no human has ever seen God the Father, except Christ himself (John 6:46; see also 1:18, 5:37; 1 John 4:12, 20). The Ascension stresses, on the other hand, that Isaiah saw not just Christ on his throne, but God the Father himself (9.39).[30] It is possible, as Robert Hall has argued, that there is some competition among the communities behind these two literary productions, although it may be going too far to suggest that we can know the inner workings of these groups.[31]

The commonalities and differences between the Johannine community and the author of the Ascension of Isaiah may suggest that they were in direct contact with one another at points of their history. Their different perspectives do not require completely separate historical developments. It should always be remembered that the secessionists shared a history with but rejected the theology of the community behind the Johannine epistles. Something similar can be said of the book of Revelation, with its many ties to the fourth Gospel but its radically divergent eschatology. The traditions behind Ascension of Isaiah as well may have been forged in connection with the views behind the Gospel of John, but developed in different directions.

The Anti-Jewish Emphasis of the Text

On one point, however, the two books appear in close proximity: their views of Jews and Judaism. For both, Judaism is the God-given, true religion; but the Jews are maligned as the enemies of God. I do not need to make that case for the Fourth Gospel in this context, with its affirmation of Jewish Scripture and, say, festivals, and its simultaneous assault on "the Jews," children of the Devil (ch. 8). But it is important to consider how these views play out in the Ascension of Isaiah. Here, even though polemic is not the driving force of either the Martyrdom or the Vision, there is ample

opposition to Jews throughout, with the implicit claim that Jews have forsaken their own religion. That appears to be the reason the great Hebrew prophet Isaiah is chosen as the subject and, indeed, pseudepi-graphic presence, in the book; he testifies to the truth, and his views are rejected (much like John 1:11; "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him").

Thus we are told that Beliar caused "many in Jerusalem and in Judah" to "depart from the true faith" (1.9) and there is reference to the great "apostasy of Israel" under Manasseh (2.1–6). In 3.1 "Belchira … appeared as a false prophet in Jerusalem, and many in Jerusalem joined with him." The prophet Isaiah is martyred because of his vision of Christ (3.13, 5.15) and the Jewish leaders and people look on in approbation (5.12). Christ too is opposed by the people of Israel: "The adversary envied him and roused the children of Israel against him.… They delivered him to the king and crucified him" (11.19; note that here, as in the Gospel of Peter, it is the Jews who kill Jesus). There are parallels between the deaths of Isaiah and Christ: the former is executed because of his vision of the latter; both suffer at the hands of the people of Jerusalem inspired by Beliar; the death of both involve tree imagery (crucified on a tree; sawed in half by a treesaw). It should be emphasized that all these things were predicted in advance, not only by the prophet Isaiah but also in all the Psalms and prophets (4.21). The Jews, in other words, should have known.

In addition to these individual passages, it is important to consider the overall thrust of the book, as Greg Carey has done in an important article.[32] Carey's thesis is that the book as a whole embodies a kind of anti-Jewish polemic: "Its narrative rhetoric argues that a prominent Hebrew prophet such as Isaiah knew the pattern of Christian proclamation centuries in advance, that his knowledge was rejected in Jerusalem, and that Isaiah's martyrdom resulted from his proclamation of the Beloved."[33] As Carey observes, Christian authors of the second and third century commonly used the book of Isaiah in order to promote their anti-Jewish agenda. The Epistle of Barnabas uses Isaiah to advance his view of Christian supersessionism (14:5–8, quoting Isa. 42:6–7, 49:6–7). Justin uses Isaiah to show how Jews have falsely rejected the virgin birth and shown their own hardheadedness (Dialogue 43; 66–67, 77–78, 84). Origen uses Isaiah to very similar ends in the *Contra Celsum* (1.28–29, 32–38), stressing Isaiah's message that the

proclamation will be taken, then, to the gentiles (2:78, citing Isa. 65:1; 1:53 citing Isa. 42:4).

And so, at the time of the writing of the Ascension, Christians in other contexts were engaged in anti-Jewish polemic and using the prophecies of Isaiah to accomplish these ends. As we will see in Chapter Twelve, an attack on Jews is not the only emphasis of the Ascension—or even its only polemical thrust—but it is certainly one of them. As Carey summarizes: "Despite its Christological and visionary emphases, the apocalypse's entire narrative structure communicates an apologetic against non-Christian Jews."[34]

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

We have already considered the Coptic Gospel of Thomas with respect to its rejection of an apocalyptic eschatology, and there is no need here to repeat my introductory comments on the book as a whole.[35] One other area of obvious polemic in the book involves the sayings that discuss Jews and the Jewish religion. Here there is a fairly specific orientation: the relevant logia may vary in their harshness, but they uniformly demean both Jewish cultic practices and the Jewish people.

Saying 6

This is the first saying in the collection that broaches the issue of Jewish acts of piety, as the disciples ask Jesus about how they are to be practiced: "Do you want us to fast? And how should we pray? Should we give alms? And what kind of diet should we observe?"[36] One immediately thinks of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus deals with some of these issues; but as DeConick has pointed out the order is reversed in Matt. 6:1–8 (alms, prayer, fasting), so there is probably not any literary dependence.[37] What is most striking is that the Jesus of Thomas does not seem to answer the disciples' questions—or at least the answer is delayed until saying 14. So close are the two logia that some scholars have argued that they were originally a unity separated in the course of transmission, either because a page came to be displaced (the question appeared on the bottom of the page and the answer at the top of the next, but another page came to be intercalated between the

two),[38] or because of a fluke at the oral stage of the tradition in a recitation of the sayings of Jesus.[39]

Even taken as an integrated saying, as it stands, logion 6 appears to disdain these acts of piety—which are to be understood as Jewish, not simply human (see saying 14 and its appeal to kashrut).[40] Jesus' reply vitiates the need to fast, pray, and give alms, that is, to engage in external acts of Jewish piety. Instead, one is to be truthful and to observe the negative golden rule. It is personal behavior that matters before God, not Jewish religious customs and laws: "For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing that is covered will remain undisclosed." Acts of Jewish piety are therefore irrelevant at best.

Saying 14

If, as it seems, the response of saying 14 is to be taken with the questions of saying 6, then acts of Jewish piety are not merely irrelevant; they are harmful: "Jesus said to them, 'If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits.'" The next part of Jesus' response may seem, at first, irrelevant to these conditional clauses and their condemnations, but in fact it may be the key to understanding them. Jesus moves into the question of food, specifically whether those engaged in the Christian mission should try to observe kosher food laws. He answers with a resounding no:

> And when you go into any land and walk in the countryside, if they receive you, eat whatever they place before you and heal the sick among them. For whatever goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it is what comes out of your mouth that will defile you.

The concerns of missionaries are not food regulations. They are instead the welfare of other people ("heal the sick") and proper speech. What one eats is not what defiles a person, but the speech that comes from the mouth. The Christian missionary proclamation is to have precedence over kosher concerns. Is this the original context for the denigration of the other pious activities at the opening of the logion? Acts of Jewish piety are far less

important than the mission. A similar concern, with a similar perspective, is found elsewhere in the Jesus tradition, especially Luke 10:8–9. There, however, Jesus speaks of entering a different "town" whereas here he speaks of entering a different "land." The mission has expanded since the logion preserved in Luke, and naturally it is harder to find kosher food in foreign lands than in the various towns of Israel.

The stress on "what comes out of your mouth" may have a deeper meaning in the context of the Gospel of Thomas. This is a Gospel that is all about discourse. It consists exclusively of sayings of Jesus, sometimes set in dialogic context; and it is the "interpretation of these sayings" that provides eternal life (saying 1). Teachings are of ultimate importance for this author, and presumably for his community. As Valantasis puts it, "The search for the interpretation of the sayings takes precedence over the traditional pious practices."[41] But the matter can be expressed even more firmly. Traditional practices are not only bypassed by the need to read, interpret, and teach; engaging in these earlier practices is seriously detrimental, leading to sin, condemnation, and spiritual damage. This is a new religion that displaces the old and declares it harmful.[42]

Saying 27

It is clear that saying 27 must relate to the preceding two in its condemnation of cultic practices. But how does it do so? On the surface it seems to embrace what they spurn, by claiming that one will not "find the kingdom" if one does not "fast from the world," and will not "see the Father" if one does not "make the Sabbath a Sabbath." Does this not require Jesus' followers to practice acts of Jewish piety: fasting and Sabbath observance?

It is worth noting that fasting here is not said to involve abstention from food (the normal meaning of the word, not just in Jewish piety), but from the world. As such, the saying appears to embrace a broader ethic than a periodic religious fast: it means abstaining from the pleasures and activities of life in order to obtain the kingdom of God. Rather than pushing for a Jewish ritual practice it is urging a more rigorously ascetic lifestyle, a disengagement from life.

A variety of interpretations have been proffered for the enigmatic injunction to "make the Sabbath a Sabbath." It could mean, for example, that one should truly observe the Sabbath (make it a *real* Sabbath); alternatively, it could be playing on the term *rest*, and be saying that one should rest from taking a day of rest—that is, precisely, *not* observe the Sabbath.[43] The latter interpretation would coincide well with both the first part of the saying and with sayings 6 and 14, and so is probably to be preferred.

Another option has been proposed by Peter Nagel, who points out that the words used for "Sabbath" are given variant spellings in the surviving Coptic text (SAMBATON and SABBATON). This leads him to suggest two meanings for them: in one instance Sabbath refers to the day of the Sabbath, and in the other it means "week" (as in Luke 18:12; Mark 16:9).[44] This leads to a possible reconceptualization of the saying, as spelled out in the expansive translation/interpretation of Plisch:

> If you do not refrain from the world
> (and not only from a part of it, as certain food, etc.)
> You will not find the kingdom;
> If you do not observe the (entire) week as Sabbath
> (instead of only some "holy days")
> You will not see the father.[45]

In this rendering, it is important for the Christian to enter into repose permanently, not just temporarily. In that sense, once again, Jewish practices are superseded and no longer in force. They are, in fact, harmful. Jewish language, then, is being used to oppose Jewish religious practice.

Saying 39

This saying presents a direct polemic against Jewish Pharisees and scribes. They know how to enter into God's Kingdom and can provide this knowledge for others, but they have refused to do so. They "have taken the keys of knowledge and hidden them. They have neither entered nor let those wishing to enter do so." And so the Jewish leaders have not only

condemned themselves before God, they have brought about the condemnation of other people.

The polemic is comparable to what one finds in the New Testament, especially in the famous set of "woes" found in Matthew 23. The saying itself appears to be a conflation of tradition otherwise known from Matt. 23:13 and Luke 11:52. The obvious contrast in the Gospel of Thomas is with Jesus himself, who not only has the keys of knowledge but reveals the divine secrets, the correct interpretation of which can bring eternal life (saying 1).

Saying 40

This brief saying may not be directed against Jews and Judaism per se, but against anyone who is not rooted in God: "A grapevine has been planted outside of the Father. And since it is not strong, it will be pulled up by its root and perish." Plisch takes it as a reference to people in general who do not find the source of their sustenance in the Father.[46] So too Valantasis understands the saying as polemical, but simply directed against "another religious community."[47] But it should not be overlooked in this connection that the Hebrew Bible sometimes portrays Israel as a grapevine or vineyard, occasionally with negative implications about its viability (Ps. 80:9–10; Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21). Read in light of these passages, the saying does not provide an aphoristic truth claim about "any" grapevine that happens to be "planted outside of the Father." Instead it makes a statement of fact, that a grapevine "has been planted outside the father." This specific grapevine is weak, and will be destroyed. It is hard not to take the saying as directed against historical Israel, to be destroyed because it is not located within the sphere of the true God.

Saying 43

This saying is surprising in several ways. For one thing, it begins with a challenge from the disciples to Jesus, which stands at odds with the normal Thomasine portrayal of the disciples as obedient, if sometimes slow, students of the master: "Who are you to say these things to us?" Jesus' frank reply is damning especially in the broader context of the Gospel of

Thomas: his disciples do not understand who he is, despite his teachings. Since it is only through understanding Jesus' teachings that one can have eternal life, the consequences of their ignorance—and the challenge of his authority—are rather stark.

But Jesus castigates them even further, likening them to "Jews": "Rather, you have become like the Jews; for they love the tree but hate its fruit; and they love the fruit but hate the tree." This is surely a negative characterization in which the disciples are damned by association. But is there a specific meaning to "fruit" and "tree" in this context? Valantasis thinks there is, but gives a rather palliative interpretation. The tree represents Judaism and the fruit represents Christian faith: "The saying suggests that it is futile to differentiate such tree and fruit, loving one and hating the other. Even with animosity between the sibling religions, the mutuality and correlativity of the two traditions coexist inseparably."[48] Surely the negative characterization of Jews and Judaism elsewhere in the text, however, does not favor an interpretation endorsing mutual love and respect. DeConick's view is better. The disciples are like the Jews who are unable to decide whether to love the tree or the fruit: "This is the voice of a community which is in the process of separating itself from its Jewish roots."[49]

At the same time, the saying is more than that. The Jews are portrayed negatively here, as those who cannot decide what to love and what to hate. The supposed followers of Jesus who cannot understand him are like that: without knowledge—the correct understanding of his teachings—they do not know what to think; and if they do not know what to think, they will never inherit eternal life. Like the Jews.

Saying 52

In this saying the disciples exclaim that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish prophets, only to earn his rebuke for listening to dead voices rather than the voice of the living: "His disciples said to him, 'Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and they all spoke about you.' He said to them, 'You have abandoned the one who lives in your presence and have spoken of the dead.'"

There has been considerable speculation concerning who the twenty-four prophets of Israel were. They are probably best understood as the books of the entire Hebrew Bible, as in 2 Esdras 14:45, where Ezra is instructed to publish all the Scriptures he has inscribed: "The Most High spoke to me, saying, 'Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them.'" For many early Christians, Jesus came in fulfillment of Scripture, and Scripture provided testimony to who he is; Judaism is thus the forerunner of Christianity that prepared the way for Christ. For the Jesus of the Gospel of Thomas, on the other hand, the Hebrew Bible is dead and defunct, and the religion it supports is of no value. It is not the Old Testament that is to be studied, but the sayings of the living Jesus.[50]

Saying 53

Following the rejection of ancient Israel and its scriptures in saying 52, saying 53 makes a direct attack on the Jewish practice of circumcision, comparable to the attack on other aspects of Jewish cultic life in saying 14. When the disciples ask whether circumcision is beneficial, Jesus delivers a stark reply: "If it were beneficial, their father would beget them already circumcised from their mother. But true circumcision in the spirit has become entirely profitable." It is important to note that Jesus does not simply express the superiority of spiritual over physical circumcision, as the saying could easily be misread. The final clause does indeed indicate that spiritual circumcision is beneficial, as found in texts of the Hebrew Bible (Jer. 4:4) and other early Christian writings, including those associated with Paul (Rom. 2:25–29, 3:1–2; Phil. 3:3). But in this case the superiority of spiritual circumcision is coupled with a complete rejection of physical circumcision, which is of no value at all. This is a vivid contrast with Paul's own view (Rom. 3:1–2), that circumcision is valuable "much and in every way." For this author, circumcision is of no value whatsoever; otherwise, boys would be born circumcised. Since they are not, circumcision does not come from God.

This denigration of circumcision is at the same time a denigration of what it means to be Jewish. Rather than representing the sign of the covenant made between God and his people, circumcision is to be rejected as of no religious value. To this extent the Jesus of Thomas embraces a

view found in other anti-Jewish writings, such as Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* 19.3: "As I already explained … it is because circumcision is not essential for all men, but only for you Jews, to mark you off for the suffering you now so deservedly endure."[51]

THE DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM

The so-called church orders include such books as the Epistula Clementis (although as earlier noted, it is not usually included in the group), the Didache, the Apostolic Tradition, the Apostolic Church Order, the Didascalia Apostolorum, and the Apostolic Constitutions. There is some question over whether it is appropriate to consider these books, and others like them, as a coherent genre, but in any case they do tend to discuss a range of topics related to the administration of the church (not all topics are found in each book): church organization, ethical and to some extent doctrinal instruction; the appointment of church officers; the duties of each office; church discipline; and instructions for liturgical acts such as baptism, eucharist, and ordination. The Didascalia Apostolorum is notable within the group for its strong anti-Jewish slant. It was allegedly written by the twelve apostles after the death of Jesus, but like the Epistula Clementis and the Apostolic Constitutions (which takes it over virtually wholesale), it too is forged. For those who wanted an authoritative account of the church—its offices, organization, beliefs, ethics, and so on—no better option existed than a book of instructions from the apostolic band itself.

The Didascalia was originally written in Greek, but is now preserved completely in Syriac, with extensive portions in Latin. Traditionally it is dated to the early third century, although the most recent study of Alistair Stewart-Sykes places its final composition in the early fourth century.[52] It was first published in 1856 by Lagarde from a single Syriac manuscript. One of the great scholars and translators of the work, R. H. Connolly, considered it to be a unified text,[53] a view that held sway for most of the twentieth century, up to the more recent investigations of Paul Bradshaw and now, most notably, Stewart-Sykes.[54] Whatever one makes of the integrity of the text, the author(s) were clearly dependent on earlier traditions that have been incorporated into the work. In its final form, the book presents the "teaching" of the twelve disciples. Unlike some of the

other church orders, there is no detailed instruction on liturgical practices; and, as we will see, large portions of the book are neither (directly) polemical nor written in the first person. Among the topics it addresses are sin and its consequences, penance, bishops and how they should judge and forgive, the need to support bishops and honor all the clergy, the settlement of disputes, the role of widows and deaconesses, the Christian relation to the Jewish Law (this is where the book becomes polemical, and where the author most frequently reverts to first-person discourse), and the related theme of heresy.

The most recent, detailed, and somewhat convoluted source-redaction analysis of the work comes in the new translation and introduction of Stewart-Sykes. In addition to two major sources underlying the bulk of the instruction, Stewart-Sykes claims that there were two later redactors. He labels one the "deuterotic," because he opposed the "secondary legislation," that is, the Jewish Law given by Moses as a punishment to the Jews for their idolatry, after he delivered the true Law of God, the Decalogue. The other redactor is called the "apostolic" because it was he who inserted the first-person authorial claims in the names of the apostles. If this view is right, then the final product that circulated in the manuscript tradition is what I have called a "redactional forgery." The older sources and their combination into the bulk of the text were written anonymously; but by redacting the piece in the names of the apostles, sometimes narrated in the first person, the apostolic redactor has made not only his occasional additions but also the redacted whole a forgery.

The jury is still out on Stewart-Sykes's complicated redactional analysis of the work. But it is clear that some redaction, at least, has taken place, in many instances awkwardly, as there are serious editorial seams in the work that become evident upon a close reading.[55] In particular Stewart-Sykes makes a good point about the apostolic redactor: the topics addressed in the first person tend, as a whole, not to be those of the rest of the book, and in these passages the tone turns polemical, just when authorization for certain views becomes especially important. As we will see more fully, the apostolic first-person narrator inserts himself only rarely in the early chapters of the book (e.g., Matthew in 2.39.1)[56]; by the end of the book, however, the device becomes common. And it is not difficult to identify the first-person narrator's overarching concerns. It is in the context of heresies and schisms that the first person becomes prominent, especially in

discussions of the secondary legislation. The fundamental aim of this part of the text is "to dissuade Christians from keeping the Jewish Law."[57]

One may well wonder why the redactor did not edit his work more exhaustively by setting up a pseudepigraphic frame at the outset. G. Schöllgen—writing well before Stewart-Sykes's complex source-redaction analysis but anticipating it in at least one key point—gives a compelling explanation:

> A possible, indeed perhaps the most plausible, explanation for the limited presence of the frame in the first third appears to me to be the assumption that the Didascalia was originally not conceptualized as an apostolic writing and sought to proceed only by means of extensive argumentation from Scripture against problems in communal practice.[58]

The Authorial Claims of the Text

The issue of authority—a matter of concern for all the church orders—is clear at the outset of the book, even without the first-person narrator. The Didascalia is written "from the command of the Savior" (1). The later pseudepigraphic references, then, when they do start to appear, make that "command" all the more plausible. This teaching comes from Christ through the apostles. Still, the most peculiar feature of the authorial claims of the Didascalia is precisely their uneven spread.[59] The unidentified narrator at the beginning of the book continues until 2.14.9, where suddenly the author speaks in the first-person plural in reference to Judas Iscariot praying with "us" but doing "us" no harm.[60] Obviously one is to take the first person to be the other eleven disciples, but nothing more is said about the matter at this point.

As one moves through the book, first-person references begin to appear, more or less out of the blue, without any self-identification and without pushing any obvious ideological or theological agenda (2.6.16, 2.7.1, 2.8.1, 2.52.3, 3.9.2, 4.9.2). At other times it is clear that the apostles are the "we,"—as in the recollection of Jesus' washing the disciples' feet in 3.13.4–5. The first occurrence of a first-person singular narrative is 2.39.1, "I Matthew." In this instance the reference is occasioned by the mention of

"tax collectors" in the previous paragraph; but it is probably significant that this is also the first context in which "false brothers" are discussed.

It is not until the final third of the book that the first-person narration becomes prominent. When looked at as a whole, the alternations between first and third persons are awkward. For example, even though, in the final product, this is the apostles talking, they sometimes talk about themselves in the third person, as in 2.20.1, "for to the bishop it was said through the apostles."[61] Or in 2.26.7, "the presbyters are also to be reckoned to you as a type of the apostles." It seems especially odd for Matthew to speak in the first person in 2.39.1 ("I, Matthew") but then to have the Gospel of Matthew referred to impersonally, "Now in the Gospel of Matthew it is written thus" (5.14.11).

On the other hand, it is perhaps not surprising that once the text moves to discuss doctrinal matters, the basis for correct teaching is not made merely by natural arguments and appeals to Scripture, but by the personal authority of the apostles who were with Jesus, spoke with him, ate with him, and were witnesses to him (5.7.25–26). Doctrine in particular needs special apostolic authorization. So too when the author tries to settle a major controversy over the celebration of Passover, he speaks in the first person in the voice of the apostles who personally participated in the Last Supper (5.14.1–5, 5.17.1). And again, when the matter of heresies and schisms appears, the first-person narrator can appeal to having heard the Lord himself (6.5.1–4). In particular, he stresses that God has departed from "the people" (i.e., the Jews) and moved into "the church" (i.e., the Christian community), and this has happened "by means of ourselves the apostles" (6.5.4). Satan too has come to the church, for example in the person of "Simon the sorcerer," whose encounters with the true representatives of God are narrated in the first person by the apostles, and in particular "I, Peter" (6.9). Most especially, "because the entire church was in danger of falling into heresy, we twelve apostles gathered together as one in Jerusalem to determine what should be done" (6.12.1). They decided that they would write up this "didascalia," so that the entire book, in this final redaction, is understood to be the document that emerged from the Jerusalem conference, convened to attack false teaching (6.13.1).

This claim to apostolic authorization for its teaching had its effect. Epiphanius, for example, held the document to be apostolic (*Panarion*, 70, 10ff.).

Nature of the False Teaching

Stewart-Sykes has a clear vision of the function of the deuterotic redactor: "The fundamental aim of the redactor is to deal with the challenges posed by Jewish Christians."[62] Unlike the earlier works we have studied in this chapter, the opponents here, in other words, are not Jews from outside the church but Christians who insist on still following aspects of the Jewish Law. For the most part, the attack on Judaism is, therefore, indirect; but as we will see, there is also direct polemic against Judaism itself as a false religion. That is why, ultimately, followers of Jesus are not to practice it.

Most of the Didascalia is not polemical in nature. When the polemic does begin to appear, however, it is in relation to the Jewish Law. In an important passage early on (1.4.7–10), the author indicates that the true Law is the "Decalogue and the judgments." What he calls the "deuterosis"—the "secondary legislation"—is the Law given after the incident of the Golden Calf, when Moses returned up the mountain and received all of the Law other than the ten commandments. Christians are to avoid this secondary legislation: "Keep away from all its instructions and commands, so that you do not lead yourself astray and bind yourself and weigh yourself down with ancient bonds which cannot be undone" (1.4.7). Christ came, for this author, in order to fulfill the Law (i.e., the true Law, the Decalogue) and to weaken the bonds of the secondary legislation, making them null and void for his followers.

This early passage is an adumbration of the fuller exposition near the end of the book, 6.15–23. Christians are not to follow the Law that was given in order to punish Jews for their sins: "You who have been converted from the people [i.e., from among the Jews] who believe in God and in our Saviour Jesus Christ should not now be continuing to keep to your former conduct, keeping pointless obligations and purifications, and separations and baptismal lustrations and distinction between foods" (6.15.1).

The temptation to follow the secondary legislation is not limited to converts from Judaism, however, as the author earlier addresses "especially you who are of the gentiles" (5.14.22). And so the problem involves both ethnically Jewish Christians who continue to follow the prescriptions of Torah and gentile Christians who have been convinced, presumably by them, to do so as well. For this author, the true Law of God, which certainly is to be followed, is "simple … pure, and holy." It is the Decalogue, as shown by a curious kind of gematria. Since it is specifically a "Deca"-logue, it can be represented by the letter iota (the numeral ten); and it is iota that begins the name ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (6.15.2). And so the Decalogue is for the followers of Jesus, and only the Decalogue: "Thus the law is indissoluble, whereas the secondary legislation is transitory. For the law is the Decalogue" (6.15.3–4).

The secondary legislation was given by God out of anger, when the children of Israel committed idolatry in the incident of the Golden Calf: "Then was the Lord angry, and in the heat of his anger, yet in his merciful goodness, he bound them to the secondary legislation as to a heavy load and the hardness of a yoke" (6.16.6). This deuterosis required them to make frequent burnt offerings, to observe strict food laws, purifications, "and much else that is astounding" (6.16.9). Followers of Jesus, however, have been "released from the worship of idols through baptism, as from the secondary legislation. For in the Gospel he renewed and fulfilled and confirmed the Law, and abolished and abrogated the secondary legislation" (6.17.1). That, in fact, is why Christ died: "to redeem us from the bonds of the secondary [legislation]" (5.5.3).

Anyone who continues to try to keep the secondary legislation, therefore, is "guilty of the worship of the calf" (6.18.9); what is more, "if you uphold the secondary legislation you are also asserting the curse against our Saviour. You are ensnared in the bonds and so are guilty of the woe as an enemy of the Lord God" (6.18.10).

It should be clear from the foregoing that the main target of the pseudepi-graphic polemic is a form of Jewish Christianity, defined, in this instance, as a Christianity that insists on the ongoing validity of Jewish ritual observances. The author appears to have other opponents in view as well, and indeed he may not have neatly differentiated among them. For one thing, Jews who are not followers of Jesus also come under attack, on grounds that can easily be imagined. They are no better than "pagans [who]

go in the morning to worship and serve their idols when they rise from sleep" (2.60.2). They are, in fact, "vainly called Jews" (2.60.3), by resting on the Sabbath they show that they are "idle." They do not have any faith. Most severely, "they do not confess the murder of Christ, which they brought about through transgressing the law, and so repent and be saved." They are, then, without "excuse before the Lord God" (2.60.4). Indeed, they "made the Lord angry by not believing in him," (5.16.1) and they hate the Christians (5.14.23).

The other target of attack is a group of "heretics" whose crimes of unbelief are spoken of in such general terms that it is impossible to know exactly who they were or what they believed. The names Simon and Cleobius (6.8) may be traditional, picked up, perhaps from 3 Corinthians, which I will discuss in a later chapter. The charges against these heretics may also have been derived from this Pauline forgery, as they are accused of refusing to use the laws and the prophets, of blaspheming God the Almighty, and of not believing in the resurrection (6.10.1)—all charges dealt with not only in 3 Corinthians but throughout the writings of proto-orthodox heresiologists attacking "Gnostics." At the same time the opponents are said to forbid marriage and the eating of meat, charges commonly associated with overly rigorous encratites (also Gnostics?); yet others insist simply on not eating pork and on getting circumcised—charges involving, now, the secondary legislation (6.10.3–4). It may be that in this instance the author is simply attacking heresy in general, rather than having specific targets in mind. In any event, he claims that the rise of these opponents is what prompted the Jerusalem conference and the writing of this very didascalia (6.12.1), even though, as I have noted, the vast bulk of the instruction has nothing to do with such false teachings.

The author shows a particular awareness of, and irritation toward, other Christian leaders who "come falsely under the name of apostles" (6.13.2), who are evidently having an influence on the churches. One hardly need note the thick irony, in this book that falsely claims to be written by the apostles, actually produced some two centuries after their demise. Who the author has in mind as apostolic impostors is anyone's guess. If he knew of actual writings celebrating the importance of the Jewish Law for Christians —such as the forged Epistula Petri or the forged Grundschrift lying behind the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies*—then we would be altogether justified in labeling his work a counterforgery in the strong sense.

C. Fonrobert, on the other hand, has argued that the immediate occasion for the book was not Christian literary activity but non-Christian Jewish—specifically that the book and its instructions for Christians is a response to rabbis in the process of codifying what became the Mishnah:

> The Didascalia spends so much time arguing about the "second legislation," and the correct way of reading Scripture, because it recognizes that there are other ways of reading, potentially legitimate or persuasive ways of reading at that, that challenge the sense of Christian identity that the Didascalia itself wants to convey.[63]

At the end of the day it may be impossible to decide this issue. But it bears repeating that the explicit target of the author's polemics in almost every instance is false teachers within the Christian community. Only rarely, as we have seen, does he attack non-Christian Jews; instead, his concern is with followers of Jesus who keep the Jewish Law. This may tilt the scale in favor of seeing the context as less a confrontation with local rabbinic activities and more a concern over Judaizing practices within the Christian communities themselves.[64] And as we will see in a later chapter, there are other polemical issues touched upon by the author, again involving internal church dynamics.

THE ACTS OF PILATE

Unlike the other books we have considered in this chapter, the Acts of Pilate was massively popular throughout the Middle Ages. More than five hundred manuscripts still survive in Latin, Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Aramaic, Armenian, and Georgian. The manuscripts in the vernaculars of Europe are even harder to tally. They can be found in Castilian, Catalan, French, Italian, Occitan, Portuguese, German, English, Danish, Dutch, Old Norse, Swedish, Gallic, Irish, Bulgarian, Polish, Old Slavonic, and Czech.[65]

Patristic References to an Acts of Pilate

We appear to have references to an Acts of Pilate before any such book existed. The first occurs in Justin's First Apology, where he indicates, about the passion of Jesus, "That these things really happened, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate" (35.9).[66] Later he states "That Christ did perform such deeds you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate" (48.3). The second reference shows that these "Acts" are not thought of as some kind of official *acta* recording the events of Jesus' trial, but a fuller account of some kind. Historians have always treated both references gingerly. Directly before the first of them, Justin also suggests that his reader can learn about the town of Bethlehem "by consulting the census taken by Quirinius, your first procurator in Judea." Apart from the fact the Quirinius was never a procurator in Judea, there is the problem that the census itself, referred to in Luke 2, was almost certainly Luke's invention (or that of Luke's community or oral source), designed with the express purpose of locating Jesus' actual birth in Bethlehem despite the fact that everyone knew that he came from Nazareth. Justin, in other words, is making things up. There was no census record to consult, and no Acts of Pilate. He may well have simply assumed that they must have existed.

Some decades later Tertullian refers, not to acta, but to correspondence allegedly sent from Pilate to the emperor Tiberius. Tertullian's first reference does not actually mention Pilate, but indicates that "So Tiberius … hearing from Palestine in Syria information which had revealed the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the Senate, with previous indication of his own approval" (*Apol*. 5.2). Here again we are dealing with an obvious fiction, both with respect to Tiberius' attempt to obtain the senate's approbation of Jesus' divine status and to his receipt "from Palestine" of correspondence to that effect. The second reference clarifies that the alleged correspondence came from Pilate: "All these facts about Christ were reported to Tiberius, the reigning emperor, by Pilate who was by now a Christian himself, as far as his conscience was concerned" (*Apol*. 21.24). That Pilate eventually became a Christian was later narrativized in some of the writings of the Pilate cycle. The presence of the tradition in Tertullian's reference to a correspondence does not inspire confidence in the report, which is fully implausible even on its own merits.

A further reference occurs in the "Passion of Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus," three martyrs during the Great Persecution of 304 CE. Here it is not a Christian but a pagan governor, Maximus, who confronts the

accused with the existence of an Acts of Pilate: "Nonsense! Don't you know that he whom you invoke is an evil man who was hanged on a cross under the authority of a governor named Pilate, whose Acts are still preserved?"[67] In this case there is reason to think that the governor—whether a fictional character speaking for the author/narrator or a real person—was referring to an actual, existing document. For we have solid evidence that there did indeed at one time exist a pagan version of the Acts of Pilate, propagated in the context of Christian persecution at the beginning of the fourth century.

The evidence comes from Eusebius, who both mentions the document and exposes it as a nonhistorical fabrication. In speaking of the activities of pagan priests under the persecuting zeal of the emperor Maximin Daia, he indicates that they forged an Acts of Pilate as part of their strategy in attacking the Christians: (*H.E*. 9.5) "They actually forged *Memoranda* of Pilate and our Savior (πλασάμενοι δῆτα Πιλάτου καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματα), full of every kind of blasphemy against Christ."[68] He goes on to speak of the distribution of the book:

> These, with the approval of their superior, they sent to every district under his command, announcing in edicts that they were to be publicly displayed in every place, whether hamlet or city, for all to see, and that they should be given to children by their teachers instead of lessons, to study and learn by heart.

Stephen Mitchell has pointed out the strategic significance of the emperor's decision to make the text available not simply in the major urban areas of the empire, but also in more remote rural places: "Official persecution hitherto … had made little impression on the countryside of much of the empire. Retreat to the chora was a natural and effective response of threatened Christians, if they had the means and opportunity to do so."[69] By spreading propaganda against the Christians into the countryside, Maximin was able to compromise the traditional safe havens of the Christian elite who could escape the cities for areas with other overriding concerns.

Eusebius had access to this fabricated account and had no difficulty exposing it as historically worthless. Its narrative—if that's what it was—

was set in the fourth consulship of Tiberius, that is, in the seventh year of his reign. But Josephus, as Eusebius points out, indicates that Pilate was not made governor of Judea until the twelfth year of Tiberius' rule: "This clearly proves the forged character of the *Memoranda* so recently published, blackening our Saviour; at the very start the note of time proves the dishonesty of the forgers" (*H.E.* 1.9).

We no longer have this fabricated pagan Acts of Pilate and can only guess at what it contained. Z. Izydorczyk suggests that since the audience included the general populace and school children learning how to read, the account may have been very basic indeed: "possibly a list of charges against Jesus and some account of the trial."[70]

The Christian Acts of Pilate

Our first certain reference to a Christian "Acts of Pilate" comes over a half century after Eusebius, in the writings of Epiphanius (377 CE). While attacking the Quartodecimans in chapter 50 of his *Panarion*, Epiphanius indicates that they based their celebration of Easter on the eighth day before the calends of April (March 25) on the dating provided in the "Acts accomplished under Pontius Pilate." Epiphanius challenges this dating because he has seen multiple manuscripts of the work with textual variation at just this point; the date is therefore not secure. Among other things this reference shows that the Christian Acts of Pilate was in wide circulation by the 370s; it was in use among Quartodecimans; and Epiphanius had seen it in numerous manuscript copies, which he was able to collate at a key point. Ten years later, from 387 CE, we have an Easter Homily actually written by a Quartodeciman, who does just what Epiphanius claimed the group did, arguing for the date of Easter based on the "Acts Done Under Pilate."[71]

There are reasons for thinking that the Christian version cannot have been written *before* the fourth century, despite the rather quirky claim of F. Scheidweiler that it was available already in the second Christian century.[72] For one thing, if such a document were in circulation, surely Eusebius would have known about it, and would have delighted in exposing the pagan version as a fabrication based on the "true" account of Pilate's role in and attitude toward Jesus' crucifixion. Moreover, Gounelle and Izydorczyk give material reasons for thinking that the Christian version as it has come

down to us is most plausibly placed in the fourth century. In their judgment, the superior royalty of Christ makes best sense once Christianity had become a legitimate religion.[73] Moreover, the oath that Pilate takes before the sun (3.1; see also 12.1) reflects a practice otherwise not known before the fourth century.[74]

Given what can be established about the dates of the two respective Acts of Pilate, it has been widely argued that the Christian version was written to counter the claims of the pagan, which appeared some years earlier. Representative of this view are G. W. H. Lampe ("If this was the purpose of Maximin's publication, it is tempting to think that the Christian *Acts of Pilate* may have been composed as a counter-blast to it"[75]) and Z. Izydorczyk ("One suspects, admittedly on circumstantial evidence, that the AP known to us remain in some relation to those circulated under Maximin. Possibly, they were a Christian response to the polemics against Christianity evoked by Eusebius"[76]). If this view is correct, then in the surviving Acts of Pilate we have another instance of a counterforgery.

Given its extensive attestation, in many languages over many centuries, the text of this work is highly unstable, even to the extent that it has been known under a variety of names. Eventually it was most widely called the Gospel of Nicodemus, since, as we will see in a moment, it claims actually to have been written by Nicodemus himself (which is why it is a forgery). But the thorough investigations of Gounelle and Izydorczyk have shown that some variation on the title "Acts of What Happened to Our Savior Jesus Christ Under Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea" lay at the base of all the early versions of the text in Latin and the oriental languages, apart from the Slavonic, and is used in fifteen of our oldest manuscripts in the Greek tradition (starting in the twelfth century). In their view, the earliest form of the book was probably entitled "The Acts Accomplished Under Pontius Pilate." The famous account of the Descent to Hell, found in Tischendorf's B text of the Gospel, was probably not added until the sixth century. According to Gounelle, the title "Gospel of Nicodemus" became popular only in the twelfth century.[77]

The Acts of Pilate as a Forgery

Despite the earlier form of its title, the Acts of Pilate claims not to be written by Pilate but by the Rabbi Nicodemus, as stated at the outset of the narrative: "Nicodemus related all the things that happened after the crucifixion and suffering of our Lord and delivered them over to the high priests and the other Jews. The same Nicodemus compiled these writings in the Hebrew tongue."[78] The account begins then with a kind of discovery narrative:

> I, Ananias, a member of the procurator's bodyguard, well versed in the law, came to know our Lord Jesus Christ from the divine Scriptures, coming to him by faith and being deemed worthy of holy baptism. I searched out the public records composed at that time, in the days of our master Jesus Christ, which the Jews set down under Pontius Pilate. These public records I found written in Hebrew, and with God's good pleasure I have translated them into Greek, so that all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might know them. This I did in the seventeenth year of our master, the emperor Flavius Theodotius, the sixth year of Flavius Valentinianus, in the ninth indiction. (424–25 CE)

Despite the claims of the prologue, the book could hardly have been composed, originally, in Hebrew. In one of its early, amusing scenes, Pilate's courier indicates that when in Jerusalem he heard the "children of the Hebrews" crying out their acclamations to Jesus at the triumphal entry. A dispute then arises with the Jewish leaders in Pilate's court over the Greek translation of the Hebrew words the courier heard spoken on the occasion. The Greek explanations given in the text would have made no sense if in fact the scene was not originally composed in Greek (the Hebrew phrasing is itself transliterated and then translated into Greek). The claim to have been written in Hebrew, then, is simply a clumsy verisimilitude.

Even though the document is widely thought to have been a response to the pagan fabrication of an Acts of Pilate, rarely has anyone considered why a narrative of this sort would be appropriate as a counterforgery.[79] Part of the answer may lie in one of the commonly accepted features of the account, its harsh treatment of Jews, especially the Jewish leaders who force Pilate to have Jesus crucified out of jealousy. The centrality of the

Jewish leaders is established at the outset of the narrative: "The chief priests and scribes called a meeting of the council—Annas, Caiaphas, Semes, Dathaes, Gamaliel, Judas, Levi, Nephthalim, Alexander, Jairus, and the other Jews—and they came to Pilate, accusing Jesus of many deeds" (1.1). The willful blindness of these Jewish leaders to Jesus' unique identity not only as the king, a point stressed throughout the account, but also as the son of God, is hammered home time and again, chapter after chapter. It begins with the famous scene of the bowing standards in 1.5–6. When Jesus enters into Pilate's praetorium, the standards—topped with an image of Caesar—held by pagan slaves, bow down in obeisance before him. The Jewish leaders are incensed and accuse the slaves of bowing. Jesus is dismissed, the Jewish leaders get twelve of their own burly men to take the standards, six to each one. Jesus is brought back into the room, and once again the standards bow before him.

For the reader this is clear and certain proof both of Jesus' unique standing before God (even the image of the emperor worships him) and of the Jewish leaders' hardheaded and hardhearted refusal to accept it. They proceed to bring false charges against him, especially that he was "born of fornication" (alluding to the Virgin Birth tradition), and they refuse to heed when reliable witnesses testify to the contrary. Pilate in his confusion asks the witnesses about Jesus' accusers:

> "Why do these people want to kill him?"
> They replied to Pilate, "They are filled with religious zeal, because he heals on the Sabbath."
> Pilate said, "They want to kill him for doing a good deed?"
> They replied, "Yes." (2.6)

The entire trial scene pits Pilate, who wants Jesus released, against the recalcitrant Jewish leaders, who want him crucified. At one point Pilate curses the whole lot of them, not just the leaders: "Your nation is always causing riots, and you oppose those who are your own benefactors." He goes on to narrate how the children of Israel were in constant rebellion against Moses, and even against God himself, despite the miracles done on their behalf. Miracles figure prominently in this account as well, as witnesses whom Jesus has healed come forward, testifying to what he has

done. The Jewish leaders remain unmoved and eventually force Pilate's hand.

But Pilate is even more reluctant here than in the (briefer) canonical accounts, repeatedly trying to release Jesus and urging the Jewish leaders to try him themselves. When he finally yields to their insistence, it is not the leaders alone who have accepted responsibility. As in Matthew it is the Jewish people as a whole who speak the hateful words accepting the responsibility for Jesus' blood. "Pilate said to them, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. You see to it yourselves.' The Jews replied, 'His blood be upon us and our children'" (4.1). Unlike in Matthew, the scene is repeated for good measure, so that "the Jews" make their fateful declaration twice: "Then Pilate took water and washed his hands before the sun and said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous one. See to it yourselves.' Again the Jews cried out, 'His blood be upon us and our children'" (9.4). As if that were not enough, after Jesus' death the Jewish authorities decide to punish Joseph of Arimathea for providing Jesus a proper burial, and he rebukes them, recalling the earlier scene:

> "Now the one who is uncircumcised in the flesh but circumcised in heart has taken water to wash his hands before the sun, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous one; see to it yourselves!' And you replied to Pilate, 'His blood be upon us and our children.' Now I am afraid that the wrath of the Lord may come upon you and your children, just as you have said." The Jews were deeply embittered when they heard these words and they attacked Joseph, seized him, and locked him in a house with no window, setting guards at the door. (12.1)

Once again, it is not just the leaders who are at fault: it is "the Jews." And yet there are at least a few "Jews" who come off well in the narrative, most notably Joseph of Arimathea himself, who is later awarded a special postresurrection audience with the risen Jesus, and Nicodemus, the stalwart member of the Sanhedrin who desperately tries to have Jesus released rather than executed (ch. 5), and who, then, later, allegedly writes up the entire account. For this author "the Jews" may be a recalcitrant group—especially their leaders—but their problem is less that they were Jewish than that they were not Christian.

How then would this forgery serve to counter the pagan Acts of Pilate in circulation on imperial order some years earlier, in the days of Christian persecution? As we will explore more fully in a later context,[80] from the earliest days of Christian apologetics, followers of Jesus were confronted with an enormous problem in the face of Roman opposition. Their lord had been crucified by the governing authorities. By following a convicted insurrectionist, they were themselves, obviously, antagonistic to the state. It was this known antagonism that led to persecution—not belief in one God, or in Christ's divinity, or anything else. Christians were a political problem and this was obvious on the most basic level: they followed Jesus, crucified under Pontius Pilate for crimes against the state.

The obvious apologetic solution suggested itself early on to Christians who realized that it was a much better thing to be on the side of the authorities than in opposition to them. If Jesus' death was a miscarriage of justice, yet not because of an incompetent decision by the Roman governor —if Jesus did nothing to deserve his fate and if the governor was, in fact, drawn to him—then his followers too were not interested in opposing the state. In fact, they could support the state and its authorities. But how could one sell that story? The easiest way was to produce a counternarrative that stood opposed not only to history as it was known to have happened but also to the formulations of it that were highly inimical to the Christian cause. The counternarrative is found already in our earliest Gospel, Mark, where it is the Jewish leaders who hand Jesus over to Pilate and insist on his death; it is strengthened in Luke, where Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times; it is strengthened further in Matthew, where Pilate washes his hands of Jesus' blood and hears the crowd respond that they will assume full responsibility themselves (passing it on to their children). Matters go to an even more unlikely extreme in the Gospel of John, where it is the Jewish leaders who actually crucify Jesus, a view attested in still later works such as the Gospel of Peter.

The exoneration of Pilate serves not only an obvious apologetic purpose; it also makes it possible to denigrate the Jews, hated on other grounds, principally for refusing to admit that Jesus really is the messiah. This double purpose is nowhere more evident than in the Christian Acts of Pilate, allegedly written by a good Jewish rabbi who saw Jesus as the true king and Son of God, as opposed to most of the other Jews, who were hardheaded, hardhearted, hateful villains who opposed both the Roman

authority embodied in Pontius Pilate and the divine authority embodied in Jesus Christ.

OTHER WORKS IN THE PILATE CYCLE

Among the other works traditionally located in the Pilate cycle are several written in the names of well-known figures connected with the Passion of Jesus: Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, and Joseph of Arimathea (others are anonymous narratives). A number of these may well have been produced toward the end of the period of our concern: the first four Christian centuries. No one thinks that any of them is authentic. They were written by later Christians intent on applying their imaginations to the question of what those connected with Christ might have said about their role in his death and resurrection. In some instances these authors may have been motivated by rumors that some such writings once existed, as found in the references of Justin and Tertullian previously mentioned, or possibly the later report of Eusebius (based on Tertullian):

> Our Saviour's marvellous resurrection and ascension into heaven were by now everywhere famous, and it had long been customary for provincial governors to report to the holder of the imperial office any change in the local situation, so that he might be aware of all that was going on. The story of the resurrection from the dead of our Saviour Jesus, already the subject of general discussion all over Palestine, was accordingly communicated by Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius. For Pilate knew all about Christ's supernatural deeds, and especially how after death he had risen from the dead and was now generally believed to be a god. It is said that Tiberius referred the report to the senate, which rejected it. The apparent reason was that they had not gone into the matter before, for the old law still held good that no one could be regarded by the Romans as a god unless by vote and decree of the senate; the real reason was that no human decision or commendation was required for the saving teaching of the divine message. (*H.E.* 2.2.1–2)

The Anaphora Pilati

The "Report" of Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius relates the events of Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection from the perspective of the Roman governor, but in much briefer compass than the Acts of Pilate. Like that other account, the Anaphora celebrates Jesus' miraculous character, exculpates Pilate for his death, and inculpates the Jews. It is doubtful that the surviving Report is the one referred to by Tertullian, if in fact he really knew of an actual document (which seems unlikely). As it survives in the manuscript tradition, the Anaphora does not appear to date from a period earlier than the late fourth century.[81]

The first half of the brief account is largely devoted to testimony of Pilate himself to the wondrous deeds Jesus performed during his public ministry, recorded in no small measure to show the blindness of the Jews in rejecting him. And so we are told, the "whole multitude of the Jews" is hardened to these signs, and thus turn Jesus over to Pilate without being able to "convict him of a single crime" (v. 1).[82] His one fault, in their eyes, is "that Jesus accomplished these deeds on the Sabbath." Pilate, on the other hand, sees the truth: "For my part, I know that the gods we worship have never performed such astounding feats as his" (v. 5).

The Jewish leaders and people are unmoved, however, and to prevent a general rebellion, Pilate orders Jesus crucified. The astounding deeds Jesus had performed while living are surpassed by those that transpire at his death and resurrection, which take up most of the second half of the narrative:

> The light did not cease that entire night, O King, my master. And many of the Jews died, being engulfed and swallowed up in the chasms in that night, so that their bodies could no longer be found. I mean to say that those Jews who spoke against Jesus suffered. But one synagogue was left in Jerusalem, since all the synagogues that opposed Jesus were engulfed. (v. 10)

Presumably it was the synagogue of Jesus' followers that survived destruction. For this account, the nonbelievers received what they deserved for refusing to recognize Jesus as the one sent from God.[83]

The Letter of Pilate to Claudius

The letter allegedly written by Pontius Pilate to the emperor Claudius (!) has survived in several textual forms.[84] A Latin version accompanies the accounts of the Descent to Hades from the B text of the Acts of Pilate. In Greek it is quoted in Pseudo-Marcellus, *The Passion of Peter and Paul*. Yet different forms occur in Armenian and Syriac, and as incorporated in the fifth century *Acts of Peter and Paul* (chs. 40–41), whose anonymous author has probably taken the letter over from an earlier source. This final iteration may represent the apocryphon in its earliest surviving form.

In these Acts the letter is cited in the following context. Years after Jesus' death, we are told, the apostle Simon Peter and the heretic Simon Magus appear before the emperor Nero. When the emperor hears about Christ, he asks Peter how he can learn more about him. Peter tells him to retrieve the letter sent by Pilate years earlier to his predecessor, the emperor Claudius, and to have it read aloud. He does so, and the text of the letter is then reproduced.

It is not clear what to make of the anachronistic reference to Claudius as the emperor at the time of Jesus' death. The forger of the letter, living so long after the fact, may simply not have known the facts of Roman imperial history. It is also possible that the surviving letter was originally said to have been sent to Tiberius (as in Tertullian and as mentioned in the Anaphora), and that a later editor—conceivably the author of the fifth-century *Acts* that presents the letter—altered the name of the addressee (e.g., to make it refer to Nero's immediate predecessor).[85] In any event, the letter could have been composed any time between Tertullian and the fifth-century *Acts of Peter and Paul*. Scheidweiler and Elliott have suggested that it may have served as the basis for the Anaphora Pilati, in which case it would likely have arisen somewhat earlier in that period.[86]

The themes of the letter resonate with other works in the Pilate cycle. The Jews are totally oblivious to what God has done in sending Christ into the world:

> Pontius Pilate, to Claudius. Greetings. I myself have uncovered what has just now happened. For the Jews, out of envy, have brought vengeance both on themselves and on those who come after them by their terrible acts of judgment. They have been oblivious to the promises given to their ancestors, that God would

> send them his holy one from heaven, who would naturally enough be called their king; he promised to send this one to earth through a virgin. And now this one has come to Judea, during my governorship.

Despite his many miracles—or to be more accurate, precisely because of his many miracles—the Jewish leaders sought to have Jesus executed:

> They saw that he brought light to the eyes of the blind, that he cleansed lepers, healed paralytics, drove demons out from people, raised the dead, rebuked the winds, walked on the waves of the sea, and did many other miracles; and that all the people of the Jews called him the son of God. For this reason the chief priests were moved by envy to seize him and deliver him over to me; and they told lie upon lie, saying that he was a magician and that he acted contrary to their law.

As a result, Pilate himself is not responsible for Jesus' death; the stiff-necked and godless Jews are. In fact, it is not Pilate who has Jesus crucified in order to placate the Jewish leaders; they do the foul deed themselves: "Since I believed their accusations, I delivered him over to their will, after having him flogged. And they crucified him."

Moreover, after they commit the foul deed, they bribe the guards at the tomb to say that he was not raised from the dead. And that, indicates Pilate, is the reason for his letter: "In case someone else might lie about it and you be led to believe the false reports told by the Jews."

A reply of the emperor (Tiberius) to Pilate survives from manuscripts of the later Middle Ages, but as it appears to have been written no earlier than the eleventh century,[87] it is of no concern to us in this context.

The Letter of Herod to Pilate

The letter allegedly written by Herod Antipas to Pilate, found in a fifteenth-century Greek manuscript, is first attested in a Syriac version of about the sixth century. The document may have been forged in the late fourth century.[88] In it, Herod affirms the divine principle that "each will receive

his due" for the evil deeds he has done. In his case, Herod's beheading of John the Baptist has been divinely reciprocated in the grisly death of his stepdaughter, Herodia, who literally loses her head when she is swept away by a flood: her torso is borne downstream but her severed head is left in the grasp of the hands of her mother, who was trying to save her. Herod too is facing God's judgment: as he writes, "already worms are coming up from my mouth." Here the author of the letter appears to confuse Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, connected with Jesus' death, with Herod Agrippa, who according to the book of Acts was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:23). So too, the soldier Longinus, who stuck a spear in Jesus' side on the cross, meets a gruesome fate, condemned to be torn apart by a lion every night, only to have his body restored during the day in preparation for another night's agony, much as Prometheus of Greek myth.

There are clear connections between this text and the Acts of Pilate and the Anaphora Pilati. The Roman governor Pilate is portrayed in a positive light, representing the gentiles who will receive the future kingdom, as opposed to the Jews, represented by Herod, who have been rejected by God. Among its anti-Jewish sentiments is Herod's condemnation of the Jewish leadership, and with them the entire Jewish people, the one-time "children of light":

> There is no peace for the priests, says the Lord. Death will soon overtake the priests and the ruling council of the children of Israel, because they unjustly laid hands on the righteous Jesus. These things will be fulfilled in the culmination of the age, so that the Gentiles will become heirs of the kingdom of God, but the children of light will be cast out, because we did not keep the commandments of the Lord nor those of his Son.

The Letter of Pilate to Herod

As a final forgery to be considered from the Pilate cycle, the Letter of Pilate to Herod is principally concerned with showing how Pilate, along with his wife Procla and Longinus, the soldier at the cross, all converted to become followers of Christ after the resurrection.[89] One might expect the letter to have close connections with the one preceding, but apart from the titles and the appearance of some of the same names (Herod, Pilate, Longinus), the

letters have almost nothing to do with one another, and in fact stand at odds in their views. Nowhere is this clearer than in their respective accounts of Longinus. In the Letter of Herod, the solder is subject to cruel and eternal torment as an unbeliever; in the Letter of Pilate he converts to become a blessed devotee of Jesus after being confronted by him, personally, after the resurrection. It may be that the two letters were combined in the textual tradition (this one is found in the same Syriac and Greek manuscripts) simply because of their comparable titles.

This letter is also much less ostensibly polemical against the Jews, although an implicit polemic may be found in its historically remarkable claim that Pilate became a Christian convert after the resurrection. This claim may stand at odds with everything that we can know about Pilate, sparse as that is; but it stands very much in line with what some Christians wanted to say about him, in no small measure because it demonstrates yet further his basic sympathy with the cause of Christ. And if Pilate was sympathetic with Christ, who was antipathetic? It was obviously the Jews, culpable for his murder and responsible for the suffering that they have, as a result, brought upon themselves.[90]

THE ABGAR CORRESPONDENCE

The two letters of the Abgar correspondence form part of the larger Abgar legend, recounted by Eusebius (*H.E.* 1.13) and, in a later version, by a fifth-century Syriac work, the *Doctrina Addai*.[91] It may well be, as will be argued below, that the legend was built around the correspondence, which existed independently of it. The legend itself tells of the conversion of Edessa to Christianity after the resurrection through the preaching of Jesus' apostle Thaddeus (Eusebius) or Addai (*Doctrina*). Eusebius claims to have uncovered the story in the archives of Edessa, and to have translated it literally from the Syriac. Sebastian Brock, among others, has argued that both claims are improbable.[92] Where Eusebius actually found the tradition cannot be known. Eventually it came into wide circulation: it is preserved in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, and Slavonic witnesses.

There have been long and hard debates over the legend as a whole in both of its basic iterations, especially over when it came into existence and

what its overarching purpose is. The classic views of F. C. Burkitt and of W. Bauer have been superseded in modern times by the intriguing thesis of H. J. W. Drijvers that the legend was generated at the end of the third century among the proto-orthodox minority of Christians in eastern Syria in order to counter the religious claims that the Manichaeans made for Mani, the founder of their religion.[93] In a later chapter I will consider whether the letters themselves may have derived from the context of anti-Manichaean polemic. For now I need say only a few words about the anti-Jewish slant of the correspondence. We can leave the larger legend to one side, as it is not itself a forgery but an anonymous narrative.

The correspondence comprises two letters. The first is a short missive from the king of Edessa, Abgar Uchama ("the Black") to Jesus, acknowledging Jesus' miracle-working powers: "I have heard about you and your healings, which you perform without medications or herbs. As the report indicates, you make the blind see again and the lame walk, you cleanse lepers, you cast out unclean spirits and demons, you heal the chronically sick, and you raise the dead."[94]

Abgar has drawn the appropriate conclusions from the tales he has heard: "Having heard all these things about you, I have concluded one of two things: either you are God and do these things having descended from heaven, or you do them as the Son of God." His principal concern, however, is for his own, unspecified illness. He would like Jesus to come to Edessa to heal him, and at the same time to escape the animosity of the Jews in his homeland: "For I have also heard that the Jews are murmuring against you and wish to harm you." Here then is another piece of anti-Jewish rhetoric that highlights the Jewish animosity toward Jesus (and, presumably, all things Christian).

In his brief reply, Jesus blesses Abgar for "believing without seeing" (an allusion to John 20:29) but informs the king that he cannot come because he needs to fulfill his mission, that is, by being crucified. After his ascension, however, he will send an apostle to heal the king and "provide life both to you and to those who are with you" (that is, to lead them to salvation).

There are various indications that this short correspondence originated independently of the legend of the conversion of Edessa. It can at least be affirmed that it circulated separately[95]: copies of the letter in Greek can be found in two inscriptions at Euchaita in northern Anatolia, on a stone at

Philippi in Macedonia, and on a stone at Kirk Magara near Edessa, all dating from the fifth century. Later it can be found in an inscription at Ephesus on a stone over the door of a house and on a papyrus that was possibly used as an amulet. In addition, according to Judah Segal, "texts of the Abgar-Jesus correspondence are frequent in Coptic, and in many forms —on stone, on parchment, on ostraca, and as amulets on papyrus."[96]

In addition to the surviving remains themselves, we have the evidence from the pilgrim Egeria that citizens of Edessa in later times considered the correspondence significant for its magical powers, as containing a letter from the Son of God himself (*Peregrinatio Egeriae* 19). It was brought forward in times of war, miraculously scattering the armies laying siege to the city. Eventually a copy of the correspondence was affixed to the city gates to ward off enemies. This miraculous character of the correspondence was based in no small measure on the last line of Jesus' letter, which is not found in Eusebius's account, but is present both in the surviving Greek fragments of the letter and in the account found in the *Doctrina Addai*, where Jesus assures Abgar that "Your city will be blessed, and the enemy will no longer prevail over it." This line itself can still be found in inscriptions, ostraca, and amulets.[97]

It is possible that these various sources for the correspondence extracted it from the fuller legend. It is worth noting, however, that Egeria herself gives no evidence of knowing the fuller legend, but speaks only of the correspondence.[98] Moreover, the letter indicates that Jesus himself will send an apostle to Abgar after his ascension, but the legend indicates that it is Thomas who does so, with no indication of or even allusion to dominical inspiration. It may well be, then, that the legend sprang up around the correspondence in a second stage of the tradition. The tradition itself is internally uneven: the *Doctrina Addai* does not speak of a letter from Jesus, possibly under the influence of the notion that Jesus never wrote anything. Instead, according to the *Doctrina*, he sent an oral reply through a messenger.

Both Augustine and Jerome indicate that Jesus never produced any writings.[99] Other traditions exist, however, indicating that he both was able to write and did write. The best known is the apocryphal Pericope Adulterae that later found its way into manuscripts of the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus is literally said to "write" (καταγράφειν) on the ground (not draw or doodle),

a passage that Chris Keith has recently argued was originally designed precisely to show that Jesus was writing-literate.[100] Two other writings allegedly by Jesus survive, the letter that Jesus writes from the cross, addressed to the Cherubim of heaven, in the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea (although in that case one might suppose the letter was dictated …) and the Second Treatise of the Great Seth from Nag Hammadi, which, however, is allegedly written by the heavenly, not the earthly Jesus. As a result, the correspondence with Abgar is the only piece of writing allegedly produced by Jesus himself that survives. And appropriately enough, it is in response to a letter forged by the same writer, in the name of the king of Edessa, who is concerned about Jesus' fate at the hands of the recalcitrant Jews, who obviously do not recognize his supernatural character, despite the miraculous signs he performed.

As it turns out, a similar set of themes is played out in a second pair of letters preserved in the Abgar legend, at least in its later iteration in the *Doctrina Addai*. This is a correspondence between Abgar and the emperor Tiberius, allegedly written after Jesus' death. The themes of the correspondence sound very much like what one finds throughout the Pilate cycle. Abgar informs the emperor that the Jews have wrongfully crucified their own messiah: "I write and make known to your powerful and great rulership, that the Jews under your authority who live in Palestine have gathered together and crucified the Messiah who was unworthy of death."[101] They did this despite the fact that Jesus "performed signs and wonders and had showed to them mighty powers and signs." In response, Abgar has wanted to take his armies into Palestine and wipe out the Jews, but he restrains himself out of respect for the emperor.

In his reply, Tiberius indicates that he was already informed about the malevolent actions of the Jews in a letter from Pilate, and that he is now prepared to take legal actions against the culprits: "I am ready whenever I have quiet to make a legal charge against the Jews who have acted unlawfully." Pilate himself has been punished by being "dismissed in disgrace" for his part in the affair, "because he deserted the law and did the will of the Jews, and for their appeasement crucified the Messiah who … should have been honored instead.… It is right that he should have been worshiped by them, particularly since they saw with their own eyes everything which he did."

This forged correspondence presupposes the existence of an exchange between Pilate and Tiberius, as referred to earlier in this chapter. Eusebius himself knows about such an earlier exchange, but shows no knowledge of these letters between Abgar and the emperor. It appears that their forger produced his account sometime in the late fourth, or even the early fifth, century and, like the sundry authors of the writings found in the Pilate cycle, was intent not only on imagining the unimaginable—a Tiberius agonized over the death of the Jewish messiah—but also on imagining it in the harsh anti-Jewish terms of his own day.

1. Among the standard works, see especially Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire 135–425 AD* (New York: Oxford, 1946, French original 1948); Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Sea-bury, 1974); and John Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University, 1983). Among the more valuable of the spate of recent literature, see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004); Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

2. It is tempting to include the book of Hebrews as an instance of a forged polemic against Jews. But even though it does indeed appear to be a forgery, at the end of the day it is difficult to establish its function as primarily, or even covertly, polemical. It is the postscript of 13:22–25 that seems to carry the implicit claim that the author was Paul (even though he certainly was not Paul). Especially striking is v. 23: "You should know that our brother Timothy has been released; I will see you with him if he comes quickly." That the passage was originally part of the letter, see Harry Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* Heremenia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), p. 13 and ad loc. Claire Rothschild in particular has made a lively and impassioned case that the book is meant to be taken as a Pauline letter, by an author living well after Paul's day: "The author of Hebrews composed the postscript in imitation of Paul in order to pass off the text as one of his prison letters.… The author did so, not as an afterthought, but as a way of carrying out the book's original intention. That is, the postscript is a deliberate forgery by an otherwise unknown early Christian author,

claiming Paul's authorship for a work he composed to be published as part of an existing *corpus Paulinum*" (*Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon: The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009, p. 4). Rothschild's argument is that the entire letter—not just the postscript—contains numerous allusions to Paul's own writings, and that it cites an inordinate number of passages of Scripture also cited by Paul. In her judgment the Pauline materials throughout the book do not come to the author from some kind of "common stock" of early Christian traditions. They are intentional allusions to Pauline teachings, given to verify to the readers that the author is Paul.

I am inclined to agree that the letter—especially because of its ending—is written by someone who wants his readers to think he is Paul. At the same time, I do not see the letter as polemical (Rothschild does not contend that it is either). It is true that one of the major concerns of Hebrews is that its readers not (re?)turn to Judaism. And so most of the book is designed to show that Jesus is superior to anything Judaism has to offer (he is greater than the angels, than Moses, than Joshua, than the high priests, than the sacrifices, and so on). As a result, one might see in this a polemic against Judaism. But in fact the author does not attack Jews or the Judaism of his day; the form of Judaism he discusses is biblical Judaism. Even when he indicates that God "finds fault with them" (8:8), the author is referring to Israelites in the days of Jeremiah, not to Jews in his own time. The Judaism discussed in the book, therefore, is not a contemporary religion subject to polemical attack. And yet more important, it is not an evil to be abrogated. The Jewish religion of biblical times was a good religion, given by God, that has now been transcended.

3. A. Hilgenfeld, "Das Petrus-Evangelium über Leiden und Auferstehung Jesu," *ZWT* 36 (1893): 447; A. Harnack, *Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apocalypse des Petrus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893), 37–38.

4. "Justin und das Markusevangelium," *ZNW* 84 (1993): 93–110.

5. *The Gospel of Peter: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 97–99.

6. Foster argues that since the infinitive used before the αὐτοῦ and the infinitive used after the αὐτοῦ both have as the subject Jesus, then the αὐτοῦ must not be changing the person being discussed. There's a certain force to the argument, but it ultimately fails because it overlooks both the closest

antecedent for the pronoun and the established usage of Justin in his other references to the Memoirs, not to mention the problems involving the use of an objective genitive with "Memoirs." *Gospel of Peter*, pp. 97–99.

7. Among the similarities between the accounts that Foster writes off ("The Writings of Justin Martyr and the So-Called Gospel of Peter," in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007, 108–9): the use of διασύρω in Justin and σύρω in Gospel of Peter; the use of ἐκάθισαν in both to associate Jesus with a judicial function; and the request for Jesus to judge. These are indeed strong points of contact and cannot be dismissed, as Harnack earlier recognized (*Bruchstücke*, pp. 38–40).

8. Thornton's attempt to refute Pilhofer fails to convince. Rather than dealing with Pilhofer's arguments, for the most part, Thornton makes an argument of his own, that the reference in *Dial*. 106.3 speaks of Jesus "changing" the name of Simon to Peter (not giving him a nickname), and of calling James and John Boanerges. Among our Gospels, these naming events happen only in Mark, so that Justin is referring to Mark as Peter's Memoir. A good deal rests on Thornton's claim that in the other Gospels Simon's name is not actually changed to Peter; for them, Peter is a nickname. But for the Gospel of Peter and Justin, Jesus made a name change. On one hand, the argument fails to take seriously enough the fact that Simon's name was decidedly *not* permanently changed in Mark, since Jesus calls him "Simon" in 14:37. Moreover, this cannot be an argument that the Gospel of Peter is not being invoked, when the episode is not found in the Akhmim fragment, which provides only portions of the Passion narrative. Thornton's case is driven in fact by a completely different agenda: he wants to establish that by the time of Justin there was already a fourfold Gospel canon in Rome in the midsecond century, decades before its (otherwise) earliest attestation in Irenaeus. By making Peter's Memoir Mark, Thornton can show that all four Gospels are quoted in Justin's work.

9. "Justins 'Denkwürdigkeiten der Apostel' und das Petrusevangelium," in Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte*, TU 158 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 197–214. Although Greschat shows that "his memoirs" is not the Gospel of Mark, but the Gospel of Peter, she does not see the need to posit *direct* literary dependence of Justin.

0. *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).
1. E.g., Jerry McCant, "The Gospel of Peter: Docetism Reconsidered," *NTS* 30 (1984): 258–73. See the most recent discussion of Paul Foster, *Gospel of Peter*, pp. 157–65.
2. *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).
3. Translations are from Ehrman and Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 371–87.
4. See Foster, *Gospel of Peter*, 169–72. Crossan's early dating of the alleged Cross Gospel has not received much support, although he found one convert in Paul Mirecki, author of the ABD article "Gospel of Peter," vol. 5, pp. 278–81.
5. Cf. Matt. 27:24.
6. "The Gospel of Peter and the Canonical Gospels: Independence, Dependence of Both?" *Forum* 1 (1998): 28. Italics his.
7. *Doketismus*, pp. 78–92.
8. A. Kirk, "The Johannine Jesus in the Gospel of Peter: A Social Memory Approach," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. R. T. Fortna and T. Thatcher (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 319–21.
9. T. Nicklas, "Die 'Juden' im Petrusevangelium (PCair. 10759). Ein Testfall," *NTS* 47 (2001): 221.
0. Joseph Verheyden, "Some Reflections on Determining the Purpose of the 'Gospel of Peter,'" in Kraus and Nicklas, eds., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, p. 299.
1. For an overview, see Jonathan Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One: The Christology, Social Setting and Theological Context of the Ascension of Isaiah*, JSPSUp 18 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 28–32.
2. Richard Bauckham, "The Ascension of Isaiah: Genre, Unity and Date," in *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, NovTSup 93 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 363–90.
3. *Il "Martirio di Isaia" non esiste: L'Ascensione di Isaia e le tradizione giudaiche sull'uccisione del profeta* (Bologna: Centro Stampa Baiesi, 1984).
4. E. Norelli, *L'Ascensione di Isaia: Studi su un apocrifo al crocevia dei cristianesimi* (Bologne: Centro editorial dehoniano, 1994).

5. Translations of C. Detlef G. Müller, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2.
6. See my discussion on pp. 72–74.
7. Knight, *Disciples*.
8. Darrell D. Hannah, "The Ascension of Isaiah and Docetic Christology," *VC* 53 (1999): 165–96.
9. Darrell D. Hannah, "Ascension," and Hannah, "Isaiah's Vision in the Ascension of Isaiah and the Early Church," *JTS* 50 (1999): 80–101.
0. He appears to be able to see God, but not the "glory" that surrounds him; 9.29, 10.2, 11.24.
1. Robert G. Hall, "The *Ascension of Isaiah*: Community Situation, Date, and Place in Early Christianity," *JBL* 109 (1990): 289–306. Hall goes beyond what the evidence suggests in reconstructing a number of competing prophet groups in early Christianity; moreover, this set of competitions is probably not the best primary setting for the book. Among other things, Hall appears to overread AscIsa. 3.21–31, seeing it as directed against other groups within Christianity that specifically reject the doctrine of the descent and ascent of the Beloved. As I will argue later, broader issues in the apostasy appear to be involved. The ascent-descent motif does not figure in the passage.
2. "*The Ascension of Isaiah*: An Example of Early Christian Narrative Polemic," *JSP* 17 (1998): 65–78.
3. Ibid., p. 65. Emphasis his.
4. Ibid., p. 74.
5. See pp. 230–31.
6. All translations of the Gospel of Thomas are drawn from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 303–35.
7. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 62, with other reasons also adduced.
8. Allowed as a possibility by Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 63.
9. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 87.
0. Contra Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 63.
1. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 80.
2. For further interpretation, see A. Marjanen, "Thomas and Jewish Religious Practices," in R. Uro, ed., *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 163–82.

3. Both possibilities are suggested by Zlatko Pleše in Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 317, n. 37.
4. "Wenn ihr nicht den Sabbat zum Sabbat macht?" in *Sprachen Mythen, Mythizismen. Festschrift Walter Beltz*, in *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 32 (2001) : 507–17.
5. Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 93–94.
6. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 113.
7. Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 116.
8. Ibid., p. 140.
9. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 165.
0. This stands in precise contrast, for example, with the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.59, which instead *affirm* the Scriptural prophets precisely because Christ bears witness to them.
1. Translation of Thomas Falls, *The Writings of Justin Martyr* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948). I do not include a discussion of saying 104, where Jesus again appears to denigrate the Jewish practices of prayer and fasting, because I am convinced by the interpretation of DeConick (*Gospel of Thomas*, p. 282), that since fasting was connected in Jewish texts with atonement and demonic battles, Jesus' response is simply a claim not to have needed atonement and not to have needed help in spiritual warfare. In her opinion, this saying arose in the Thomasine community before they developed anti-Jewish attitudes and lifestyles.
2. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Didascalia Apostolorum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), p. 54.
3. *Didascalia apostolorum: The Syriac Version translated and accompanied by the Verona Latin fragments, with an introduction and notes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929). See e.g., p. xxxvi.
4. Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University, 2002), p. 93; and Stewart-Sykes, *Didascalia*, passim.
5. As just one example, in the account of the Jerusalem conference discussed in 6.12.3 the author indicates that he is the "apostles" and differentiates himself from "James." But then the author has "I James" speak as if he is

one of the twelve and includes himself among the apostolic band: "we, the apostles" (6.12.12, 14).

6. NB: I will not be following the twenty-four chapter divisions of the manuscripts, as these do not allow for easy cross-referencing and checking, but the more refined book-chapter-verse divisions provided by F. X. Funk and retained by Stewart-Sykes.

7. Stewart-Sykes, *Didascalia*, p. 24.

8. "Eine mögliche, vielleicht die plausibelste, Erklärung für die Rahmenabstinenz des ersten Drittels scheint mir die Annahme zu sein, daß die Didaskalie ursprünglich gar nicht als Apostelschrift konzipiert war und lediglich mit Hilfe extensiver Schriftargumentation gegen die Mißstände in der Gemeindepraxis vorgehen wollte." Georg Schöllgen, "Pseudapostolizität und Schriftgebrauch in den ersten Kirchenordnungen. Anmerkungen zur Begründung des frühen Kirchenrechts," in *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum. Festschrift Für Ernst Dassmann*, ed. George Schöllgen and Clemens Scholten (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1996), p. 115.

9. So also B. Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 55.

0. The author does use a first-person pronoun occasionally before this, e.g., in 1.1.3 ("our" Lord), 1.2.4 ("Let us"), and especially 1.7.17 ("we … you"). But he gives no indication at these points that he is presenting himself as the apostolic band.

1. Throughout I will be using the translation of Stewart-Sykes, *Didascalia*.

2. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, p. 3.

3. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, "The Didascalia Apostolorum: A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus," *JECS* 9 (2001): 501–2.

4. At the same time, it is important to affirm Fonrobert's overarching point about Jews and Christians in antiquity, that neither Rabbinic Judaism nor Christianity was a fixed point along a spectrum, and that a document such as the Didascalia cannot neatly be located somewhere along the line between them. There were obviously massive interchanges and nuanced relationships among people who self-identified as Jews and/or Christians, as is becoming increasingly clear among scholars who refuse to think simplistically about the so-called parting of the ways.

5. See Rémi Gounelle and Zbigniew Izydorczyk, *L'Évangile de Nicodème ou Les Actes fait sous Ponce Pilate* (Belgium: Brepols, 1997); and

especially Z. Izydorczyk, *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 158 (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1997).

6. Translation from T. Falls, *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*.
7. My translation of the French from Gounelle and Izydorczyk, *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 106.
8. Translation of G. A. Williamson, *Eusebius*.
9. Stephen Mitchell, "Maximinus and the Christians in A.D. 312: A New Latin Inscription," *JRS* 78 (1988): 121. For general background on Maximin Daia and his persecution of Christians, see Robert Grant, "The Religion of Maximin Daia," in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 143–66.
0. *Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 24.
1. Gounelle and Izydorczyk draw the obvious conclusion that the Acts of Pilate was in circulation in Asia Minor by no later than the second half of the fourth century. *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 108.
2. In Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocryphya*, 1.501–4. Scheidweiler's argument is demolished by Jean-Pierre Lémonon, *Pilate et le gouvernement de la Judée: textes et monuments* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1981).
3. *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 110.
4. Attested otherwise in the Apostolic Constitutions 21.52.1 and the fourth-century *Lives of the Caesars* 39.13 (*L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 110).
5. "The Trial of Jesus in the Acta Pilati," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 176.
6. *Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 24.
7. Rémi Grounelle, "Évangile de Nicodème ou Actes de Pilate," in Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2005), pp. 251–59. For a fresh English translation of the A text (chs. 1–16) and parts of the B text (including the Descent to Hell), see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 419–89.
8. Prologue. Translations taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
9. For further reflections on its value as a counterforgery, in the context of early Christian apologetics, see pp. 484–85.
0. See ch. 15.

1. See Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 491–99; and Rémi Gounelle, "Rapport de Pilate, réponse de Tibère à Pilate, comparution de Pilate," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2, ed. Pierre Geol-train and Jean-Daniel Kaestli (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), pp. 303–4, 306–7.
2. Quotations of all works from the Pilate cycle are taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
3. Another work of the Pilate cycle, the *Paradosis Pilati*, is sometimes, wrongly, taken as a direct response of Tiberius to the Anaphora; it may indeed have been conceived in that way, but it is stylistically different and is almost certainly written by another hand. As it does not claim to be written by Tiberius, but is an anonymous narrative about his reaction to Jesus' crucifixion, it need not concern us further here. See Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 501–9; and Gounelle, "Rapport de Pilate," pp. 301–9.
4. Jean-Daniel Dubois and Rémi Gounelle, "Lettre de Pilate à l'empereur Claude," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2, ed. Geoltrain and Jean-Kaestli, pp. 357–63.
5. Dubois and Gounelle ("Lettre de Pilate") maintain that the letter was originally composed as part of the Latin "Passion of Peter and Paul," thus explaining its supposed origin from the time of Nero's immediate predecessor.
6. Felix Scheidweiler, "The Gospel of Nicodemus / Acts of Pilate and Christ's Descent into Hell," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Schneemelcher, p. 205.
7. Thus Gounelle. "Rapport de Pilate."
8. See Montague R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, second series (Cambridge: University Press, 1897), pp. xlv–xlviii, 66–70; Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 523–27.
9. See Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 517–21.
0. One other interesting document of the Pilate cycle, the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea, is also forged, but probably after our period; two others, the Mors Pilati and the Vindicta Salvatoris, are anonymous narratives rather than forgeries. Texts and introductions for all three can be found in ibid., pp. 537–85.
1. For Syriac text and English translation, see George Howard, *The Teaching of Addai* (Ann Arbor, MI: Society of Biblical Literature, 1981).

2. Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harry Attridge and Gohei Hatta (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1992), pp. 212–34.

3. See pp. 455–58. F. C. Burkitt, *Early Christianity outside the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899); Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1934), ch. 1; H. J. W. Drijvers, "Addai und Mani: Christentum und Manichäismus im Dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien," *Or. Chr. A*. 221 (1983): 171–85. For a recent discussion of how the legend functioned in its later context, see Alexander Mirkovic, *Prelude to Constantine: The Abgar Tradition in Early Christianity* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004).

4. Translations from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 413–17.

5. For the following epigraphic and manuscript notes, see Judah Segal, *Edessa, the "Blessed City"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 75.

6. Ibid., p. 75. For discussion of papyrus fragments later discovered in Egypt, see Rolf Peppermüller, "Griechische Papyrusfragmente der *Doctrina Addai*," *VC* 25 (1971): 289–301.

7. Thus Drijvers.

8. The only factum that she mentions not in the letters themselves is that the letter of Jesus was brought to Edessa by Ananias; but this is also found in the superscript to the letter.

9. Augustine, *Faust*. 28.4; *Cons*. 1.7.11; Jerome, *Comm. Ezech*. 44.29 (PL 25.443).

00. *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009).

01. Translation of Howard, *Teaching of Addai*.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Forgeries Involving Church Organization and Leadership

From the earliest of times, Christian churches of every description encountered difficulties of organization and leadership. From the early years of the movement we are best informed about the churches connected with Paul, where problems arose that could make even the most stalwart apostle tremble. Nowhere is that clearer than in the Corinthian correspondence, directed to a community organized (if one can use the term) according to a charismatic principle that enabled considerable chaos to reign not only in the worship services but also in the life of the community in general, especially in competing factions and their outspoken representatives. Within such communities factionalism often played itself out in the realm of theological discourse, as subcommunities and individuals advocated views of the faith in opposition to the rest. Small wonder that the church as a whole could not continue to structure itself along such lines, that hierarchical organization and established leadership soon took hold in order to provide both clarity and direction for a church settling in for the long haul.

But even more conventionally organized communities experienced serious internal problems and conflicts over how the church should be structured and who should be granted roles of leadership. Concerns for church order are evidenced throughout our literature, whether orthonymous (Paul's letters), anonymous (e.g., the Didache), or forged. At the early stage of our literary record, nowhere are the concerns more evident than in two of the Pastoral epistles, 1 Timothy and Titus, forged in Paul's name by the same author who produced 2 Timothy, which we have already considered for another reason and in a different context.

1 TIMOTHY AND TITUS

In that earlier discussion I provided a preliminary sketch of all the background issues of relevance to the question of the pseudonymous character of these two books, and I do not need to repeat that discussion in

detail here. My argument can be summed up quickly: all three of the Pastoral epistles were written by the same author; that author was not Paul; strong arguments for this conclusion obtain from considering the three letters as group; but the strongest arguments derive from each letter individually. The arguments involving 1 Timothy and Titus were already advanced in that earlier context. Moreover, it is important to reiterate that these books were not produced within some kind of "Pauline school" (a modern scholarly invention),[1] nor can their differences be explained (in support of their authenticity) on the grounds that others of Paul's letters were produced by committee, whereas these come from the man himself.[2]

To restate one other fundamental point: even though the three letters were written by the same author, that does not justify the scholarly attempt to conflate their contents into one mega-Pastoral letter, interpreting the three as a unified and uni-functional canon, as done over the past several decades, for example, by such scholars as G. Haufe and P. Trummer, in a different way by Richard Pervo, and most recently by G. Häfner.[3] The character, concerns, and presupposed historical situation of 2 Timothy, in particular, are not those of the other two, and leveling out their differences—particularly when trying to ferret out the teachings of the opponents—creates an amalgam that is both unrecognizable and unhelpful.

For this reason, a number of scholars have argued that the three need to be considered as individual productions, just as one today is more inclined to study Galatians or Philippians as its own literary production, not simply in relation, say, to Romans. It is easy to take this move toward individuation too far, however, as William Richards does in positing three different authors for the three Pastorals, living decades apart.[4] The books should be treated individually, but they still share a number of important features. In particular 1 Timothy and Titus have a good deal in common, in language, concept, theme, and presupposed (i.e., alleged) historical situation. Nowhere is that more evident than in the two overarching concerns of the letters: the attack on false teaching and the concern to establish appropriate church leaders.

The Alleged Historical Situation of the Letters

The concerns to silence false teachers and to appoint appropriate church leaders make particular sense in the historical contexts that the letters presuppose. These situations are roughly similar to one another, and are unlike the ostensible situation of the third of the Pastoral epistles. In 2 Timothy, Paul was in prison awaiting trial and anticipating his imminent death. Not so for 1 Timothy and Titus. As a result, if one does read the letters as a corpus, it would be natural to assume that these two were written somewhat earlier in Paul's life. It is in the allusions to Paul's situation that the great bulk of the letters' verisimilitudes occur. These may not overwhelm the reader, as those in 2 Timothy threaten to do, but they are abundant enough to show that the author was quite intent on making these letters appear actually to be by the apostle himself.

In 1 Timothy Paul is hoping to come visit his young colleague (4:12) soon (3:14). He had earlier left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to lead the church, to control the false teaching that had erupted there (1:3–7, 18–20), and to be sure that the "right" people were appointed to positions of leadership (3:1–15). It is probably not technically correct to call Timothy the "bishop" of the church, although he certainly does exercise the key leadership role as the one in charge, as seen especially in 4:11–16. But unlike the resident bishop and the deacons, he is passing through. There is some question of whether Paul's designation of him as a "deacon" (4:6) is meant in a technical or general sense; and it is not clear what "gift" was bestowed upon him through "prophetic utterance" when he was ordained by the presbyterial "laying on of hands" (4:14). But however one understands this complicated passage, it does appear that a leadership role has been passed on to Timothy by leaders before him, including the apostle Paul himself.

A very similar situation is assumed for Titus. Here again there is no word about Paul being in prison; on the contrary, he is hoping to meet up with Titus in Nicopolis, where he has decided to spend the winter (3:12). In the meantime, Paul has left Titus behind on the island of Crete in order to appoint presbyters in all the cities there (1:5). These presbyters are evidently meant to serve as bishops of the churches (1:7). Titus is also to bring under control false teachers who are troubling the congregations (1:13) and to work for the social unity and appropriate behavior of the individuals, of different sorts and walks of life, who make up the churches

(2:1–10). Here too Titus is envisaged as the ultimate leader of the church on Crete, so long as he is resident among them (2:15).

The Direct Polemic of the Letters

The direct polemic of both letters involves false teachers and "Paul's" insistence that his appointed delegates bring them under control. This is the first and most urgent message to issue from the apostle's pen in 1 Timothy, immediately after the letter opening: "charge certain persons not to teach anything heterodox" (ἵνα παραγγείλῃς τισὶν μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν). And it is also the last note sounded at the end of the letter before the final farewell, "avoid the worthless empty talk and the contradictions of falsely-named gnosis" (ἐκτρεπόμενος τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως). The topic of false teaching dominates both the opening and final chapters. If that is how an author begins and ends a letter, we can be reasonably sure that it is his principle concern.

So also with Titus. Here, too, the letter begins with an attack on false teachers. Titus is to "correct what is defective," (1:5) and appoint leaders who "hold firm to the true word that is taught" (ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου), who can deliver "sound teaching" (ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ) and refute anyone who contradicts it (1:9). The false teachers must "be silenced" (1:11). The letter, again, ends on a similar note. Titus is to avoid foolish controversies (μωράς . . . ζητήσεις), genealogies, and dissentions, and arguments over the law, "for they are not of profit and futile" (3:9–11). Moreover, any "heretical person" (αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον) is to be admonished once or twice, and then shunned for good (3:10), since anyone like that is "perverted, sinful, and self-condemned" (3:11).

It is much harder to know what exactly it is that the false teachers were (allegedly) saying, whether or not they actually existed.[5] For our purposes here, it does not much matter if the opponents were real or imagined: all we have in any event is the letters themselves, and the author has presented us with a set of false teachers that he portrays as dangerous. Although he provides more information about them in 1 Timothy, the polemical thrust of Titus is very similar. None of the characterizations in the latter is missing

from the former, so that even though these are not the same false teachers attacked in 2 Timothy, they do seem to represent a single set of adversaries in these two letters.

It is clear from 1 Timothy that the opponents are imagined as coming from inside the congregation. They have "swerved away" and wandered off into "vain reasoning" (1:6), suggesting that once they had walked the straight and narrow. This is confirmed in the two cases the author mentions, "Hymenaeus" and "Alexander," who have made a "shipwreck of their faith" by rejecting their conscience; these were obviously members of the believing ship's crew before disaster struck, and "Paul" had to "deliver them over to Satan" to teach them no longer to commit their blasphemies (1:20). Later "Paul" indicates that the false teachers—not just the two he has named—are those predicted to come in the end of time, when "some will depart from the faith by holding fast to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" (πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων). He returns to the topic at the end of the letter, where he speaks of teachers from within the congregations (6:3) who do not "agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ" and the "teaching that accords with piety" (6:3). There is some hint, at least, that these teachers have gone astray from "the faith" out of love of money (6:9–10).

As so often happens in this kind of polemic, many of the accusations leveled against the false teachers reveal more about the author's prowess in generating vituperation than about the specific teachings that he finds objectionable.[6] In addition to being fond of deceitful spirits and demonic doctrines (4:1), these teachers are "puffed up with conceit," ignorant, and morbidly passionate for controversy and verbal arguments; they are "depraved" in their minds, they lack the truth, and they are pious for the sake of material reward (6:3–7). All this may or may not be true, but it can get us nowhere if we want to know what it is, exactly, these people teach.

In several places, however, the polemic becomes more specific. We may not, at the end of the day, have a coherent picture, and certainly not a complete one, but there are a few features of the false teachings that emerge over the course of the letter. For one thing, the opponents imagine themselves to be "teachers of the Law" (νομοδιδάσκαλοι; 1:7), even though they do not know what they are talking about. Presumably, from the pen of "Paul," this means that the opponents base their views on the Jewish Scriptures, or possibly the Torah exclusively. One might think that since they are characterized as ignorant, that they would be gentile Judaizers rather than Jews, but that would be pressing the polemic too hard, as it is quite easy to accuse even a qualified expert of being an ignorant dilettante.

It is also hard to know how their passion for νόμος relates to their obsession with "myths and endless genealogies" (1:4). Are these Jewish myths and Old Testament genealogies? Or are they cosmogonies such as known from later Gnostic texts? (The latter would not rule out the possibility that the proponents were ethnically and culturally Jewish.) The author returns to the opponents' "empty and ridiculous" myths in 4:7. If this were actually Paul speaking, it would be hard to assume that he would use such disparaging terms about the Jewish Scriptures; on the other hand, if it were Paul, it would also be hard to imagine Gnostic theogonies and cosmogonies sufficiently advanced, at such an early period, to have caused real and present danger to Christians in Ephesus. The "falsely called gnosis" of 6:20 sounds warning bells for anyone attuned to later second-century heresiology. But that may well be an incautious knee-jerk reaction created by deep and intimate association with Irenaeus. At the end of the day, it is hard to know what the author is referring to.

What is somewhat clearer is that the author attacks his opponents for a kind of rigorous asceticism. They "forbid marriage" and "urge abstinence from foods" (4:3). The author objects that God created these foods to be received with thanks. Unfortunately, since the author does not specify which foods he has in mind, it is not clear whether he is attacking kosher food laws or general ascetic discipline involving abstention from luxuriant or otherwise all-too-desirable edibles. The comparisons and contrasts with Paul himself are intriguing at just this point. Even though Paul did not forbid marriage, he certainly discouraged it (1 Corinthians 7); and even though he allowed all foods—even those offered to idols—he did urge his Corinthian inquiring minds to abstain for the sake of the conscience of

others, and, at least in one place, because of the demons (1 Corinthians 8, 10). The false teachers of 1 Timothy, in any event, whether seeing themselves as Paulinists or not (assuming the teachers' existence, whether they are fictional or real), actually forbid marriage and the consumption of certain foods.

What then, in summary, can we say about the teachings of the opposition? Since F. C. Baur, there have been scholars all too ready to speak of them as Gnostics. Myths, genealogies, speculations, pointless asceticism, and "falsely-called" gnosis—it all adds up. On the other hand, there is obviously no full-blown Gnostic speculation here. We don't know what the myths and genealogies are. In Titus, as we will see in a moment, the myths are specified as "Jewish." And the genealogies could as easily be connected with Scripture as with theogonies and cosmogonies known from second-century sources, Gnostic and heresiological. It may be safest to say, then, that we know some of the characteristics of these false teachers but do not have a complete picture. They stress the Jewish Law; they focus on myths and genealogies; they urge asceticism; and they rely on gnosis. It may well be that these are forerunners of groups that eventually became Gnostic, as such are some of the characteristics that could be found among groups that were to emerge later. Possibly they are proto-Gnostics. Considered within their own time, such a designation would be anachronistic: they were who they were and are not necessarily best understood in light of what later teachers would build on the foundations they laid.

The one tie of these teachers to the opponents of 2 Timothy comes in the person of Hymenaeus (1:20; cf. 2 Tim. 2:17–18). As earlier noted, by specifying an enemy, the author distances himself from Paul, who steadfastly refused, at least in his surviving literary remains, to name names. It is also odd that what the author says here—that "Paul" has turned Hymenaeus over to Satan—stands at some tension with what he says in 2 Timothy, where Hymenaeus continues to cause a disturbance in the church. One might suppose that 1 Timothy is being imagined as having been written at a later time, when Paul finally became sufficiently vexed with the fellow to give him the apostolic boot; but that solution does not accord well with the clear indications that the author envisages 2 Timothy as a kind of "last testament," written near Paul's death, making 1 Timothy, therefore, necessarily earlier. Possibly the author wanted to create another tie between

the two letters and simply did not realize that he had created a certain snafu; or, if one wants to play the game of reconciliation a bit, possibly he imagined that Hymenaeus learned his lesson after spending time with Satan, returned to the fold, but then began to misbehave again later. In any event, the reference to this Pauline headache in 1 Timothy seems to suggest that Hymenaeus' behavior is ethically problematic, and that the bad actions are connected to bad theology, since Paul needs to teach him not to "blaspheme." In 2 Timothy the problem involves belief that the resurrection is past. Possibly the author sees the opponent as problematic on numerous fronts, all in one way or another tied together, as was the situation in a remarkably similar case many years earlier with Paul and the enthusiasts at Corinth. One stark difference, on the other hand, as already noted, involves what it means to deliver a person "over to Satan."[7]

As might be expected with a briefer letter, when we move to the explicit polemic of Titus we have even less to go on. Here again there are numerous empty and stereotyped charges that are of little value for determining what the imagined or real opponents actually stood for. They allegedly stand *against* "healthy teaching" (1:9); they are "insubordinate, speakers of vain things, and deceivers" (1:10); they disrupt entire families by teaching for financial profit (1:11); as Cretans they are "liars, wicked beasts, and lazy gluttons" (as one of their own, a fellow Cretan, says; or was he, as all Cretans were, also a liar, so that in fact these charges against them are not true? 1:12); they are not "sound in the faith" (1:13); they are "loathsome, disobedient, and not fit for any good deed" (1:16); moreover, they are "heretical" (αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον), perverted, sinful, and self-condemned (3:10–11), to echo some of the polemic of 1 Timothy.

Here again, though, there are some specific identifying features of the enemy, and in many ways what is said dovetails well with 1 Timothy (though not 2 Timothy). It is striking, however, that the enemies who are particularly "insubordinate … deceivers" are especially those who "are from the circumcision" (1:10). In other words, the worst enemies, though evidently not all of them, are ethnically Jewish. This then makes sense of 1:14–15, that they pay close attention to "Jewish myths," and "human commandments" that have to do with purity regulations.[8] This is another passage, as noted earlier, that is difficult indeed to assign to Paul, who may have seen that the Law was a problem, but not that it was filled with myths and human (as opposed to divine) injunctions.[9] As in 1 Timothy, the false

teachers are involved with "foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and arguments over the Law" (3:9). With the emphasis on the "members of the circumcision," Jewish myths, purity requirements, and legal disputes, these opponents are more obviously Jewish than those of 1 Timothy; but there is nothing in the description here that runs at odds with the other book. As indicated earlier, J. Sumney may be taking the matter too far when he imagines that the two groups are presented as unrelated. There is a lot of overlap, and not just in the stereotyped polemic.

In any event, Titus is not to argue with the opponents (3:9), but to admonish them in order to return them to the truth (3:11). That is the function of the bishop as well (1:7, 9).

The Indirect Polemic of the Letters

In addition to the direct, if frustratingly ambiguous, attack on false teaching in 1 Timothy and Titus, there are elements of indirect polemic as well, one of which—the appointment of suitable leaders—is probably connected with the explicit polemic, as we will see momentarily. The other is presented just in 1 Timothy, and involves the much debated issue of the role of women in the church.

Women in the Church

It is not clear that all of the injunctions to and about women in 1 Timothy are to be seen as arising out of specific polemical contexts. In some instances, such as the instructions to widows in 5:3–10, the directives may simply involve situations that have arisen as the church has grown and developed. In other words, there is no need, and probably scant reason, to envision a controversy with other Christian leaders insisting that widows should be younger or not enrolled. Even here, however, the author cannot restrain his all-too-obvious opinion of women in the church, as is most evident in his comments on the "younger widows" of 3:11–15, who have, many of them, already "strayed after Satan," who have learned to be "idle" as they make the rounds from house to house as "gossips" and "busy-bodies," and who are inclined to "grow wanton" against Christ and get remarried. Such language is polemical not because it is directed against

another set of teachings, but because it is directed against a group of people vilified as if it were in their very nature to gad about as idle busybodies.

The point comes to a head in the infamous 2:11–15, about which enough has been said over the past fifty years to require, in this context, only a few brief words. That women are instructed to be "silent and submissive" and not to "exercise authority over a man" simply cannot be reconciled with the Pauline policy, as restrictive as it was, that required women to prophesy and pray in church only while wearing head coverings (1 Cor. 11: 2–16). Either women can speak in church or they cannot; and prophecy by its very nature asserts authority.[10] Moreover, the idea that women would be saved not by faith in Christ, for example, but by having babies is, to put the most generous spin on it, un-Pauline at best.

As in the discussion of the "young widows," this restriction, or rather curtailment, of the participation of women in the church is polemical in the sense that it is opposing an activity that almost certainly was thought to have been common: women teaching and exercising authority in the church. But can we say anything more specifically about the background to the attack? In one of the most important and interesting studies of the Pastoral epistles in recent years, Annette Merz has argued that the author is not merely on the attack against an established practice, but that he understands the practice to be rooted in a misreading, or at least an inadequate reading, of the Pauline letters themselves. In this view, the author writes the Pastorals, in part, in order to redirect the reading of a passage that Merz takes to be authentically Pauline, 1 Cor. 14:34–35.[11]

This argument is part of Merz's larger project of suggesting a theoretically sophisticated intertextual approach to the Pastoral epistles. The standard approach to intertextuality appeals to the texts that a passage refers to in order to help clarify how the passage is to be interpreted: "The openness of texts to a variety of interpretations is largely due to the dialogue between those texts which are evoked in their reception."[12] As Merz points out, however, the process of interpretation can work both ways. When the concern of the interpreter involves how to interpret a passage, and its various intertexts are invoked to that end, then it is a "text-oriented" approach. But it is also significant that once the passage is interpreted, its meaning, newly established, is often applied back to the intertexts themselves in order to deepen their meaning as well. As an example that

Merz draws from the Pastorals, when 1 Tim. 5:18 invokes Deut. 25:4 ("Do not muzzle an ox that is treading") in order to support its view that church leaders deserve to be paid, Christians familiar with this interpretation who then read the passage in Deuteronomy are more inclined to take it in the sense that it is used in 1 Timothy, so that it is understood even in its original Old Testament context to refer to paying one's minister. This inversion of the interpretative process, in which the intertext is subject to a new interpretation, is a "reference-oriented" approach to intertextuality.

Merz contends that the Pastorals are meant to provide reference-oriented strategies of interpretation for their intertexts. Or to use the terminology that has come to be in vogue, the Pastorals provide "reading instructions" for the Pauline letters to which they allude. Anyone who reads the Pastoral epistles as having come from Paul as part of his corpus of writings interprets the various passages in the Pauline letters in light of one another. The other letters can and are, then, read through the lens of the Pastorals, just as, historically speaking, they were, and are, read by readers who naturally assume that they are orthonymous.

Normally this process of reference-oriented intertextual reading implies both an alternative way of reading a text and one or more readers who read it that way. That is to say, the process is innately polemical. And so the idea that office holders in the church should be paid may seem to stand at odds with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9. But in fact if 1 Corinthians 9 is read in light of 1 Timothy 5, then those who oppose paying their preachers are put in a compromising position by "Paul" himself. So too the requirement that young widows remarry (1 Tim. 5:14) seems to stand at odds with what Paul, and many of his readers, thought, based on 1 Corinthians 7. Merz in particular argues that "Paul's" instructions in 1 Tim. 6:1–5 about Christian slaves and slaveholders has close parallels (verbal and conceptual) to Philemon 16, which could be read as suggesting that slaves were to be manumitted by their Christian owners; but not for the author of the Pastorals, who insists, as a way of countering this reading of Philemon, that slaves are to remain in their subjection to their Christian masters.

With respect to the issue of women in the church, Merz argues that 1 Tim. 2:11–15 is to be understood as a guide for reading the less forthright injunctions of 1 Cor. 14:33–36. In this connection she stresses the well-known verbal parallels between the two passages, and suggests they are no accident: ἡσυχίᾳ / σιγάτωσαν; μανθανέτω / μάθειν; ὑποταγῇ / ὑποτασσέσθωσαν;

ἐπιτρέπω / ἐπιτρέπεται. Moreover, the author has shifted from the more vague λαλεῖν to the more precise διδασκεῖν, and has filled out the rather ambiguous "as the Law says" to the specific Torah interpretation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). Most striking, the author has moved from a passive οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν to the more explicit prohibition, διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω.

As a result, as Margaret Mitchell approvingly notes, the possible ambiguities of 1 Corinthians, which in one place appear to allow women to exercise authority (11:2–16), are overcome with an explicit directive that shows how Paul is to be read.[13] Contrary to the practice, possibly built on the writings of Paul (Gal. 3:28, etc.), women are not to be allowed to be actively involved in the church's liturgy.

As insightful and potentially enlightening this interpretive move is, its difficulties reside in the obvious questions of the status of 1 Cor. 14:34–35 itself. The reference-oriented reading works only if there was a referent text in place, and there continue to be compelling reasons for thinking that the Corinthian passage is an interpolation.[14] If the Pastorals are referring to the altered form of the text of 1 Corinthians 14, the interpolation would have had to have been made at an extremely early date. Moreover, one could just as easily maintain that the verbal and conceptual parallels exist precisely because a later copyist, familiar with the words of 1 Tim. 2:11–15, decided to reinscribe their teaching by inserting a comparable passage into the text of 1 Corinthians. If so, the author of the Pastorals is not obsessed with guiding the reading of another Pauline epistle but is simply concerned with a practice that he deems inappropriate and even dangerous, as women speak out and exercise authority over men. As we will see, this is a common anxiety for the forged church orders, which show a constant concern that the activities of women needed to be regulated in the names of the apostles.

The Church Offices

One of the overarching concerns of both 1 Timothy and Titus is obviously the leadership of the church. As I have already observed, it is important to note that the author does not take steps toward establishing the sundry church offices. By the time of his writing, there were already bishops and deacons in the churches with which he was familiar. In other words, this writer is not advancing beyond the charismatic communities known, say,

from the Corinthian correspondence to propose a more hierarchically structured organization. He was living in an age in which the hierarchy was already in place and in which church leaders were ordained to office; communities were no longer run by Spirit-filled members who received gifts at baptism. The question the author is concerned to address involves the qualifications of these leaders. The emphatic insistence that only the "right people" be allowed to occupy leadership roles may well relate to the other polemical concerns of the letters. Here only a few words need to be said about these roles.

It is clear from 1 Timothy that the ἐπίσκοπος is ultimately in charge of the church, after the apostle himself and his appointed delegate, Timothy. This much is evident from 3:5: just as the bishop manages or runs his own household, so too he is to manage or run the church. Since one can "aspire to be bishop," the leaders appear to be chosen from candidates who wish to be considered; they are not chosen completely by lot or some other divinely ordained procedure. Presumably the same applies to the deacons as well.[15] It is not clear how the πρεσβύτεροι (plural) of 5:17 who "rule" relate to the bishop (singular) of 3:1–7, or to the διάκονοι of 3:8–13, whether the "elders" are a separate group of men or instead are the men who inhabit the other two categories. If they are a separate group, it seems odd that the author does not spell out their qualifications, as he does for the others. In Titus they are to be "appointed" (1:5). In any event, it is somewhat unclear whether there are three offices involved here (bishop, presbyters, deacons) or just two (bishop, deacons), both of which constitute "elders."

Titus is instructed to "appoint presbyteroi in every city" (1:5). Obviously, since they are to be appointed, the presbyteroi are not simply older men, but (older?) men who have a leadership role in the churches. Since the author goes on to describe the qualifications of the episkopos two verses later, without indicating that he is talking about someone else now, a reasonable assumption is that the appointed elders in fact are appointed to be overseers. The qualifications of 1:7–9 are similar to those found in 1 Timothy, although there is a greater emphasis here on the need for the bishop to silence false teachers (1:9–11). There is no reference to the διάκονοι in this briefer letter.

For our purposes one of the most interesting questions has to do with the polemical function of these concerns over church leadership. As I have noted, both of these books begin and end with injunctions about false

teaching and contain similar doctrinal concerns scattered throughout. Is this concern for "healthy teaching" unrelated to the need to allow only the right people in leadership roles? Or, rather, are the overarching polemical concerns of these books directly connected with their interest in leadership? As just indicated, Titus itself makes the connection directly, especially in 1:7, 9–11. Just as Paul's personal delegates are instructed to get the false teachers under control, so too are the bishops.

One of the salient purposes of these forgeries, then, is to give apostolic authorization for a church hierarchy that was needed in no small measure because of the variegated and dangerous teachings that had emerged in the Pauline communities near the end of the first century (assuming that this is when the letters were written, if not later). In the broader picture, how could "false" teachings most effectively be countered? By setting forth the true, apostolic teachings. When there were no longer apostles around to provide these teachings, one solution was to employ a form of literary deceit more widely used in the surrounding world at large. Claiming to be an apostle, an author could write treatises promoting the proper understanding of the faith, lying about his identity in order to advance the cause of truth. Moreover, true teaching could best be enforced from the top down, by leaders of the churches who saw the truth and were willing to silence anyone who violated it. And how was one to authorize the "right kind" of church leadership? Forgery again proved to be a useful tool. Writing in the name of Paul, a later forgery could presuppose the proper church hierarchy, insist on certain ecclesiastical arrangements, such as keeping women silent, and promote the cause of having the right leaders in charge.

Eventually within the proto-orthodox tradition this insistence on apostolic doctrines (even if found in forgeries) and on apostolic church structures (again, supported pseudepigraphically) created the need for other forms of authorization. This need is what drove the development of the various arguments over "succession" in which both the teachings of the orthodox churches and the bishops of those churches could be established as standing in continuity with predecessors who were appointed by those who stood directly in the line of the apostles. And since the apostles learned at the feet of Christ, and Christ came from God, the church hierarchy and the doctrine it proclaimed was divinely sanctioned. Those who proposed different structures or different theological views could be cast out as schismatics and heretics who had alienated themselves from the Almighty.

The Pastorals and the Acts of Paul

In pursuing the motivating factors behind the forgery of the Pastoral epistles, we need to consider a once-popular opinion that these three books were written, at least in part, in order to counter the views embodied in the second-century Acts of Paul. I will not be dealing with the Acts of Paul as a possible forgery or counterforgery per se, since so far as we can tell from both patristic references and the scant manuscript tradition, the book, or set of books, did not claim Paul as the author but only as the leading subject of its narrative. The author, in other words, did not make a false authorial claim.

There is a debate over whether Tertullian has in mind the same Acts of Paul that has come down to us in our scattered manuscripts, when he makes his famous deprecatory comment that "it was a presbyter in Asia who put together that book compiling the work from his own materials in the name of Paul. Having been convicted, he confessed that he had done it out of love for Paul" (*De baptismo* 17).[16] Stevan Davies has mounted a multipronged argument that Tertullian has in mind an actual forgery that no longer survives, rather than the extant Acts; but W. Rordorf and A. Hilhorst have provided convincing refutations and defenses of the traditional view,[17] and in the end, the matter does not affect the questions I want to pursue here, which involve instead the relation of the surviving Acts, especially the Thecla story, to the Pastoral epistles. It does bear emphasizing, in any event, that Tertullian does not accuse the author of the Acts of Paul of forging the document but of fabricating it—a major difference (that is, it was "written in Paul's name" because the "Acts of Paul" names Paul in its title). This too is the claim of Jerome, who stresses that the book is apocryphal precisely because it is historically inaccurate (*Vir. Ill.*, 7). Jerome's proof: if such a story as Paul and the baptized lion had actually occurred, surely Luke would have known of it and included it in his canonical account of Paul's ministry! Moreover, it should be stressed that according to Tertullian, the offending presbyter was not expelled from office, as often claimed. After admitting to what he had done, he left office himself.[18] The Acts of Paul was judged—at least by these two authors—as an unacceptable fabrication.

But can the Pastoral epistles be understood as forgeries meant to counter the claims of these apocryphal tales? If so, how does one explain their relative dating? Already a century ago Hans Helmut Mayer argued that the

Pastorals were directed, in part, against some of the views found in the Acts of Paul, a view influentially popularized by Dennis MacDonald in the early 1980s.[19] To evaluate the view, we need to consider some of the important data.[20]

There are six proper names that occur in the Thecla story connected with Paul. Five of them occur, as well, often in related connections, in the Pastoral epistles: (1) Demas (AP, 3.1; 2 Tim. 4:10; also Col. 4:14 and Phlm. 24) in both places deserting Paul, both times for greed; (2) Hermogenes (AP, 3.1; 2 Tim. 1:15), whose name occurs only in these two places in early Christian literature, and in both places he is twinned with a companion and deserts Paul in Asia Minor; (3) Onesiphorus (AP 3.2; 2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19), mentioned in early Christian literature only in these two places, and in both instances he is connected with Asia Minor, he befriends Paul when Paul is in prison, and he appears with his family; (4) Titus (AP 3.2; 2 Tim. 4:10; Tit. 1:4; ten times in 2 Corinthians and Galatians); and (5) Alexander (AP 3.26; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14), who is said to oppose Paul, in both places, and only there. The one exception is Castellius (AP 3.14), who appears in the Acts only as a governor at the trial, not in Paul's ministry per se.

It is also worth noting that in both corpora there are two people connected with Paul who indicate that the resurrection has already taken place (Demas and Hermogenes in AP; Hymenaeus and Phileus in 2 Timothy). Moreover, both corpora connect a "coppersmith" with Paul, either Alexander (2 Timothy) or Hermogenes (AP).

In addition, there are four place names mentioned in the Acts of Paul, three of which also recur in the Pastorals: Iconium (3.1; 2 Tim. 3:11; five times in Acts); Antioch (3.1; 2 Tim. 3:11; sixteen times in Acts, once in Galatians); and Lystra (1.3; 2 Tim. 3:11; five times in Acts). The one exception is Myra (AP 3.40; twice in Acts).

Some of the material parallels between the works are similarly impressive. For example, from outside the Thecla story, in AP 11.1, we learn that Luke from Gaul and Titus from Dalmatian were awaiting Paul at Rome. Compare this with 2 Tim. 4:10–11, where Paul is writing from prison, presumably from Rome, and he indicates that Titus has gone "to Dalmatia" and that "Luke alone is with me." More striking still is the famous account of Paul and the baptized lion in the Acts of Paul. At this point of the narrative, Paul has been staying with Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, and everyone else has turned against him. With no support, he

makes a bold witness before the governor and the crowd. The governor condemns him to be eaten by a ferocious lion, but the lion—Paul's previous acquaintance and convert—refuses to eat him and they both flee the scene unharmed. Compare this with 2 Tim. 4:16–19, where "Paul" indicates that no one took part at his defense and that everyone deserted him; but "the Lord stood by me and strengthened me so that the message could be fully proclaimed through me and all the Gentiles could hear." Moreover, at that time, "Paul" indicates that he "was saved from the mouth of the lion." He continues on, then, to send his greetings to Prisca and Acquila.

Despite these verbal and material overlaps, there are antithetical emphases in these two corpora that make their relationship of particular interest. And so, for example, 2 Tim. 3:6–7 attacks those who enter into households and capture weak women. This is precisely what the apostle himself appears to do in the Acts of Paul, certainly in the case of Thecla and later with Artemilla and Eubula. Similarly, Titus 1:10–11 speaks of opponents who upset entire households. Evidently these Christian teachers urge some form of asceticism, since Titus responds by asserting that with the pure all things are pure (i.e., nothing is forbidden). Thecla's household in the Acts of Paul was certainly turned topsy-turvy by Paul's proclamation in the home of Onesiphorus next door, a proclamation that has a rigorously ascetic bent. 1 Tim. 4:3 opposes those who are driven by deceitful spirits and the doctrines of demons to forbid marriage. So too, the Pastor requires leaders of the churches to be married, and urges young widows to remarry and have babies. In the Acts of Paul, Paul may not condemn marriage, but he certainly discourages it, as in the lead case of Thecla; moreover, it is his enemies Hermogenes and Demas who offer the teaching, contrary to Paul, that the resurrection happens precisely in one's progeny. In 1 Tim. 2:15 women are said to be "saved" by having children; whereas in the Acts of Paul women learn, through Paul's beatitudes, that it is the celibate who abstain from sex who will be blessed. So too, whereas the Pastor's women are not allowed to teach, but must be silent and submissive, in the legends Paul commissions a woman to go forth and teach (AP 3.39, 41, 43). Finally, whereas 1 Tim. 4:3 opposes those who abstain from certain foods, Paul in the Acts appears to maintain a vegetarian diet (AP 3.23–25).

And so, without yet drawing a specific conclusion concerning the direction in which the influence went, it is difficult to withstand the conclusion of J. Rohde that the Acts of Paul accepts as "legitimate

teaching" what the Pastorals reject as "false."[21] Indeed, it would be a mistake to claim that the two corpora are unrelated, on the ground, for example, that so much material present in each—the legends of the Acts and the teaching of the Pastorals—is neither found nor maligned in the other. No one need think that the single purpose of either body of writings was to attack the other; but some such polemic could well have been at least one of its purposes. At all times we need to recall that texts, as a rule, are generated for multiple reasons and serve multiple purposes. And so we are justified in considering the reason and purpose of the Acts of Paul in relation to the Pastoral epistles.

The most provocative view of the relation of the two corpora was the aforementioned monograph of Dennis MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*.[22] In his study, MacDonald explored three episodes of the Acts of Paul: the Thecla story, the account of the baptized lion, and the martyrdom of Paul. He argued that these stories were based on oral traditions that had been in circulation principally among Christian women in Asia Minor, so that Tertullian's presbyter was simply writing down accounts he had heard. The Pastoral epistles, on the other hand, were written in opposition to these oral traditions. There is not, in other words, a direct literary dependence between the two works, one way or the other; nor is the Acts of Paul responding to views eventually embodied in the Pastoral epistles. The relationship is the reverse: the Pastorals are responding to oral traditions that were later put in writing in the Acts of Paul.

Despite the attractiveness of the theory, it suffers from a weak set of arguments used to undermine a more obvious solution, that whoever wrote the Acts of Paul was reacting to the (earlier) Pastoral epistles. MacDonald argues that the influence did not go in this direction because, first of all, any author, such as the composer of the Acts of Paul, who "wanted to alter the traditional memory of a historical figure" (the author of the Pastorals), "would be more likely to use forged letters than a collection of stories."[23] But surely this is not self-evident; if the Pastorals themselves can be read as a kind of narrative—as Richard Pervo and others have tried to do[24]—there is no reason they could not be responded to by a narrative. And there is certainly nothing to preclude an author writing a narrative that had, as a subsidiary purpose, the opposition to a view of his protagonist set forth in some other influential writing, regardless of genre. MacDonald goes on to

argue that if the author of the Acts was opposing the Pastorals, "we would expect to find him authenticating the narrative in order to secure credulity over against the epistolary opposition." Here again, there is no reason that we should tell authors what they ought to do, or expect them to take what in the modern critical mind seems to be a more effective approach.

Most important for MacDonald is his claim that a theory of literary dependence is able to explain the similarities between the two texts, but not the differences in the details. For example, in the Acts of Paul Hermogenes is associated with Demas; but in the Pastorals he is associated with Phygelus. If one is dependent on the other—as arguably shown by the similarities—it is hard to account, in MacDonald's view, for such differences.

The major problem with this position is that it requires far too narrow an understanding of how literary dependence can work and overlooks an entire range of possibilities involving secondary orality. It is not necessary to suppose that an author who is responding to a text will have the writing on his knee, comparing every line as he proceeds to write his narrative (or epistle). He may just as well—especially in an ancient context—have heard the earlier text read aloud, possibly multiple times, and decided then to respond to its themes. Many of the names and places may well be recalled, but it is altogether possible that the specifics get lost. I myself have read the Pastoral epistles literally hundreds of times in both Greek and English, and I could not tell you, without looking it up, with whom Hermogenes is associated in the text, or even if Phygelus is mentioned in it. One should not respond by insisting that matters were different in past oral cultures; if studies of oral cultures have taught us anything, it is that stories were not remembered or repeated precisely the same way in every iteration.

There is a broad consensus that the Acts of Paul as we have it are the product of the late second century. If these are the works referred to by Tertullian in *De baptismo* 17—which continues to be a strong consensus—and if he is correct that they were first put together near the end of the second century, then on virtually any reckoning they came into existence some time after the Pastorals. If, as appears evident, there is some kind of relation between the two corpora, the most sensible solution is to think that the author of the Acts is responding in narrative form to the image of Paul, and of his views, found in the earlier texts. He worked to rewrite Paul in significant ways. Paul's message is now one of rigorous ascetic celibacy

(whereas in the Pastorals he condemned asceticism and urged women to have babies); women are now empowered and allowed to teach and preach; and the unity of the home is not to be protected.

At the same time, it should be stressed that even if the Pastorals were not written as responses to the Acts of Paul, the traditions and views embodied in these later accounts were not invented out of whole cloth sometime late in the second century. Ascetic impulses can be found early in the Christian movement, as evidenced not only in the Pastorals. Paul himself urged celibacy in view of the "impending crisis" and insisted that "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." Women were afforded active roles in the churches, as seen, most strikingly and emphatically, by Paul himself, as attested in Gal. 3:28; Rom. 16:1, 7; and 1 Corinthians 11. Other Paulinists objected to such views, urging the value of the extended family and the Haustafeln that kept everyone in their place, arguing for the "freedom" of the whole person in Christ, propounding the virtues of marriage and sexual activities. The apocalyptic urgency that created an unworldly and, seen from a Roman point of view, antisocial attitude among Christians eventually lost out to (what cannot help but appear to observers today to be) a bourgeois ethic.

In that environment the Pastoral epistles were written, in part to oppose views advocated by other Paulinists, opponents who could well appeal to Paul himself for their views. These views did not die out with the writing of opposing forgeries in Paul's name. They lived on in some circles that passed along the oral traditions they inherited about the apostle, which stressed the importance of the ascetic, celibate life and celebrated the important roles that women could play in the church. Eventually these traditions came to be written down in such works as the Acts of Thecla. The Pastoral epistles may not be counterforgeries in the strong sense of being produced in order to oppose the view found in another identifiable forgery, or even an existing legendary fabrication; but they are counterforgeries in the weaker sense of opposing views associated otherwise with Paul by using the best set of ammunition available to the unknown author: the name of the apostle himself. The real, but unknown, author lied about his own identity in order to bring the apostolic voice to bear on a set of issues that were very much a matter of intense debate in his own day.

THE FORGED CHURCH ORDERS

We have already seen that several of the "church orders" produced in our period were forged. This would include the Epistula Clementis, the Didascalia, and the Apostolic Constitutions, the last of which could also be considered a case of plagiarism, depending on how far one stretches the meaning of the term.[25] The earliest examples of the genre were not always forged: witness the anonymous Didache, which avers to propound the teaching of the twelve apostles, but whose author does not claim to be the apostolic band or even one of its members. So too the Apostolic Tradition, later attributed, wrongly, to Hippolytus of Rome.[26] Other church orders fall outside of our time period.[27]

There have been long debates over the character of these documents and their instructions for church organization and administration. Do they represent descriptive and reasonably full accounts of the protocols that governed the life of the Christian community? Or do they deal only with issues and problems that have arisen within an author's purview, and do not therefore provide a full representation of the organizational and administrative issues that a community had to address, the bulk of which would have been nonproblematic and therefore in no need of discussion? That is to say, are these church orders reasonably exhaustive and descriptive accounts? Or are they selective, polemical, and prescriptive?

The decision between these two options obviously matters. If the church orders are principally descriptive, then in them we gain an extensive insight into the lives of the pre-Constantinian churches, at least in the regions from which they derive, and by subtraction we can see what these churches were not doing as well. If they are principally polemical and prescriptive, they are not protocols for the most important activities of the community, but *Tendenzschriften* that deal only with what the author perceives as the problems and (possibly deplorable) state of affairs in his community. This too would be helpful historically, as it would show us what internal organizational issues were being debated in the Christians communities of the first three hundred years.

Bruno Steimer, in his study *Vertex Traditionis*, a 1991 dissertation at Regensburg, takes the first position. The book deals with twelve church orders, starting with the Didache and moving up through the fifth-century Clementine Octateuch. Steimer is chiefly concerned with establishing the

generic features of these works, but he deals extensively with issues related to pseudepigraphy throughout, especially in a closing section exclusively devoted to the question. In this final section he argues that although pseudonymity is not a generic requirement, it is one of the ways that the author of a church order could most successfully perform his task, in that the apostolic pseudonym naturally provided legitimation for the positions he asserts. That is to say, the apostles are typically presented as "formal authorities" to back up the views that are advanced and work to show that these orders were normative for the church from the outset, all the way back to the apostles of Jesus themselves.[28] The pseudepigraphic claims, therefore, function to gain the works acceptance and universal validity.

Steimer summarizes the important matters dealt with in this literature, most of them involving the church as an institution: the qualification and selection of leaders, their duties, church discipline, ethical and doctrinal instruction, observance of rituals such as baptism and eucharist, and so on. In Steimer's view, these books represent the church's actual practice, and to that extent they are descriptive accounts. For that reason, it is possible to recreate extensively the activities of the early churches, since the most important church concerns are addressed "mit Umfassendheit."[29]

A trenchant review of Steimer's work by Georg Schöllgen provides compelling counterarguments to this view.[30] Schöllgen focuses on the Didache, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Didascalia, arguing that for these three, "nowhere is it clear that they intend to order life in their communities comprehensively. There is no 'pretended universalization of order' to speak of."[31] For Schöllgen, the church orders do not represent a codification of the typical praxis of the community; rather, they deal with problems that had arisen—such as those, quite obviously, involving itinerant prophets and apostles in the Didache. This is shown especially by the fact that the authors have had to cement their views in writing, accompanied with paranesis, under the authority of the apostles. The authors are trying to argue a case in light of abuses in the community, involving such matters as the roles of women, alternative forms of governance, and care of the poor. They do not simply indicate something about the status quo. Among other things, church orders represent an attempt to make the monepiscopate more central to the life of the community.[32]

In particular, the forged character of these books shows that they were not written simply to state the current state of affairs: "Pseudepigraphy is thus a clear argument against the 'reflection theory': Why should a church order, which does not intend anything but 'to put into writing' the community's practice, do so not in the name of its actual authors or its community, but instead takes the risk of being unmasked as an act of deception?" The use of pseudepigraphy served then to justify practices where there were controversies about them: "The borrowed authority of the apostles was intended to make the text binding in a way that the author could not have achieved by publishing it under his own name."[33]

It is especially significant for Schöllgen that these documents are scripturally based. The authority of the apostles, as found in Scripture, was important for establishing the veracity of the claims made in them. And so the apostolic character of the church orders is in a sense an extension of the authority of Scripture, so that these too function as Scripture in dealing with community problems that had arisen.[34] What is more, when a book like the Didascalia likens the office of the bishop to the office of the apostle, with similar functions ascribed to both (νουθετεῖν, διδασκεῖν), the bishop is presented as having the same role in his congregations that the apostles have for the entire church. They are the mouth of God and the witness to the divine will, through the proper interpretation of Scripture.

In short, when considering the church orders, we are dealing with inherently polemical literature, even when the polemics are below the surface. Sometimes, of course, the polemics are front and center, as we have already observed with the Didascalia. At other times, however, they are far more subtle, as we can see by looking at other aspects of these works.

The Didascalia

We have already considered the Didascalia at some length with respect to the anti-Jewish character of its teaching on the "secondary legislation," which was put into the document, according to the theory of Stewart-Sykes, by the deuterotic redactor, who worked before an editor inserted the apostolic claims that make the text pseudepigraphic.[35] There is no need at this stage to review all of the relevant background information on the document itself and its (possible) redactional states. Rather we can turn to

consider several of its other polemical interests, also advanced in the names of the apostles after the death of Jesus.

The Role of the Bishop

Some readers have suspected that the heightened emphasis on the role of the bishop in the life of the community is not simply descriptive of situations that widely obtained at the time of the author's writing, but represent a plea to grant the bishop greater authority. It is striking that eight of the twenty-seven chapters of the book deal with the office, responsibilities, and behavior of the bishop. Charlotte Methuen contends that "the Didascalia must be seen as part of an ongoing struggle to establish a more hierarchical Church centered on the bishop, which led to the discrediting of other forms of authority and the groups which supported them."[36] In particular she has in mind church groups that stressed the possibility of women exercising authoritative roles in the work of teaching and baptizing, a matter to which we will turn momentarily. But it is also possible that the stress on the bishop was driven by broader concerns of localizing the power of the local congregation in the hands of one authority figure who was able thereby to marginalize and overturn schismatic and heretical factions advocating alternative forms of polity or the age-old bugbear, "false teaching."

The Celebration of Easter

In an analysis that only an inveterate source critic could love, Alistair Stewart-Sykes provides a long and complicated discussion of the multiple redactions of what comes down to us as chapter 21 of the Didascalia, a chapter that discusses passion week and the sequence of days leading up to the celebration of Easter. It is by all accounts a complicated and confusing part of the text, with instructions concerning what to perform on which days in relation to Jesus' last week and, as well, in relation to the Jewish feast of Pascha:

> Thus it is required, brothers, that you investigate carefully in the days of the Pascha and perform your fasting with all diligence, making a beginning when your brothers from the people [i.e., the

> Jews] are keeping the Pascha. (5.17.1) … Therefore from the tenth, which is the second day of the week, you shall fast in the days of the Pascha. You shall sustain yourselves with bread and salt and water only, at the ninth hour, until the fifth day of the week. However on the Friday and Saturday you shall fast entirely. (5.18.1) … For this reason you likewise are to mourn on their behalf on the sabbath day of the Pascha, until the third hour of the night following. And then, at the resurrection of Christ, rejoice and be glad on their behalf, and break your fast. (5.20.9) You shall observe it in this way whenever the fourteenth of the Pascha should occur, for neither the month nor the day falls at the same time each year, but is changeable. Thus you should be fasting when that people performs the Pascha; yet be careful to conclude your vigil within their (week of) unleavened bread. (5.20.10)

In an attempt to make sense of the various comments of the text, Stewart-Sykes argues that the book originated as a document that embraced a Quartodeciman perspective, but that it was later edited to oppose this perspective.[37] The result was a view that supported the observance of Easter on Sunday, but within the Quartodeciman milieu—that is, during the celebration of the Pascha, but always on a Sunday—a compromise position hammered out in the midst of some rather fierce controversy over the celebration of this most important festival in the life of the church.

The Role of Women

Several scholars have argued that a particular concern of the Didascalia is to control the activities of women in the church. G. Schöllgen, for example, maintains that the directions given to widows not to engage in pastoral duties, but to do good deeds only in the sphere of the home, represent a polemic against other practices that were being followed, a view supported by Carolyn Osiek and, strongly, Charlotte Methuen.[38]

The instructions given to and about widows occur in book 3. A widow must be over fifty years of age (3.1.1)[39]; she is not allowed to remarry more than once: “After this she is a harlot” (3.2.2). The author is especially concerned about widows who are “talkative or loud, or garrulous, or fond of strife” (3.5.1). Widows are not to instruct in doctrine, since “when a woman

speaks of the incarnation and suffering of Christ, [the gentiles] shall sneer and scoff, rather than glorifying the word of the old woman, and she shall be subject to a harsh judgement for her sin" (3.6.1). Women, then, are not to teach, but "solely to pray and beseech the Lord God" (3.6.2). The author's apostolic logic: when the Lord "sent us, the twelve" to proclaim the gospel, he "did not send with us the women disciples who were with us … to instruct or save the world." Impeccable logic, of its sort. The author instructs widows not to "wander or go from house to house" (3.6.4), and is especially concerned for widows who go about begging for alms, "caring only for mammon" (3.7.3–4).

In particular he stresses that women are not allowed to baptize, even other women (3.9.1–2). But they may serve as deaconesses who can speak to other women in the houses of pagans and to anoint with oil other women at their baptism, although it must be the man who pronounces the invocation of the divine names at the ceremony (3.12.1–3). Moreover, women are allowed to educate other women who come out of baptism, "so that the mark of baptism may be kept intact in chastity and holiness" (3.12.3).

In short, as summarized by Carolyn Osiek, women are not considered empowered subjects in this text; they are "reduced to cloistered ignoramuses who can be trusted with nothing"; they cannot speak to pagans or else they will make Christianity an object of ridicule (3.5); they must stay at home to pray and spin, or they will be spiritually bankrupt (3.6, 7); they can engage in no ministry unless ordered by the bishop or deacon, whom they must obey (3.8); for them to baptize would be dangerous both to themselves and to the ones they baptize (3.9); just as the altar does not move about, so too they must stay at home (3.6.3).[40]

As indicated, several scholars have suggested that the vehemence with which these injunctions are set forth suggests that the author is trying to prescribe a form of church authority in the face of opposition from another model. Thus Methuen: "The tone and content of these instructions make it likely that they are a polemic against women who do indeed baptize and teach and who in so doing assume a function and authority which the author regards as the exclusive province of the bishop."[41] And Osiek: "The length of texts devoted to the subject and the vehemence expressed are exceptional, however, and seem to indicate a reaction to some real or imagined threatening situation."[42]

According to Methuen's reconstruction of the historical *Sitz*, a group of widows who are accustomed to teaching and baptizing have come into the Didascalia's community from another group: "The strength of his reaction against the widows suggests that they might come from outside the Didascalia congregation, representing a group which subscribes to a different pattern of ministry and authority, and, moreover, to one which grants freedom and authority to women."[43]

In response, it might be pointed out that there is nothing in the polemic to suggest any outside influence. More likely the author's polemic is directed against what has traditionally happened in the community and what continues to happen in his own day. He is writing to prevent women from engaging in activities they were already involved with.

Osiek puts the matter in a sensible broader context:

> The more hierarchically structured Christian churches of the second and third centuries often felt themselves to be in a state of siege because of the threat posed by the more "charismatic" or loosely structured communities that more often than not seem to have allowed a great deal of freedom and responsibility to women, especially in the area of religious leadership.

As a result,

> the attempt to restrict severely the activities of widows is, no doubt, part of the well-known reaction against the freedom exercised by women in rival Christian groups. Or, more specifically, it could be a reaction against the very important role played by members of the order of widows in neighboring churches.[44]

To this extent, the Didascalia would be a kind of counterforgery, in the broad sense, produced, in its final redaction, in the names of the apostles in order to rein in a dominant practice in which women, and especially widows, were exercising considerable authority in their roles in the church.

The Apostolic Constitutions

At the outset of our investigation we saw a number of key aspects of the Apostolic Constitutions.[45] The book is a heavily redacted text that combines three otherwise extant documents in order to make a more all-encompassing church order: the Didascalia (in what are now chs. 1–7); the Didache (ch. 8), and the Apostolic Tradition (ch. 8). To the end is added the eighty-five "Apostolic Canons," which may have had a separate transmission history at some stage, but are now known only in their connection with this larger work.[46]

Thomas Kopecek has noted that the Greek text of the Apostolic Constitutions was first edited in the sixteenth century by a Spanish Jesuit, Franciscus Turrianus, whose interest in the work, as a Roman Catholic, was to appeal to its apostolic authority in order to refute the Protestant understanding of the church. In the centuries that followed, Anglican divines cited the final book of the work in order to advance their views of the liturgy, as sanctioned by the apostles. As Kopecek points out, "This interpretation died hard."[47]

Possibly this late use of the document can provide a clue as to the purpose of its original concoction. For it does indeed appear to have been generated in order to justify certain ecclesiastical structures through the sanctioning power of the pens of the apostles. It was only when the sources of the work were discovered and evaluated that scholars abandoned any claims to its apostolic provenance.

Pseudepigraphic Character and Date

Of the three sources that were used to construct the Apostolic Constitutions, only the Didascalia came to the editor/author (in its final redacted form) as pseudepigraphic; the other two works were anonymous. But when edited into a larger whole, all three works have become pseudonymous, and in fact the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions has gone well beyond the Didascalia itself in emphasizing his book's apostolic origins. As noted earlier, the apostolic claim is made, now, at the beginning of each of the major divisions (beginnings of books 1, 7, and 8). On occasion throughout the work the author speaks in the first-person plural as eyewitnesses and disciples of the earthly Jesus, as in 2.55.2:

> After His passion [we] the twelve apostles, and Paul the chosen vessel.… We therefore, who have been vouchsafed the favour of being the witnesses of His appearance, together with James the brother of our Lord, and the other seventy-two disciples, and his seven deacons, have heard from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by exact knowledge declare "what is the will of God, that good, and acceptable, and perfect will."[48]

Or in book 6, when speaking of the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15:

> But because this heresy did seem the more powerful to seduce men, and the whole Church was in danger, we the twelve assembled together at Jerusalem.… We deliberated, together with James the Lord's brother, what was to be done.… And when one said one thing, and some another, I Peter stood up and said to them [etc.] … (6.12)

In Book 8, "we, the twelve apostles of the Lord," (8.4) along with Paul and James (the brother of Jesus), give instructions, individually by name: "I, Peter, say that a bishop to be ordained is to be … chosen by the whole people …" (8.12); "And I James, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee say, that the deacon shall immediately say …" (8.12); "Concerning the ordination of deacons, I Philip make this constitution" (8.17). And so on. The apostolic band contained in the first-person plural is not always the same throughout that text. Thus, for example, 6.12 mentions the Eleven, Matthias, and James, but does not include Paul among the "we" who are speaking. Yet, in addition to the twelve, Paul, James, and Clement all elsewhere speak in the first person.

Sometimes the author alludes to the lives of individual members of the twelve in the first person, as they occasionally speak out to say something to identify themselves, for instance, Matthew, who calls himself the tax collector (2.24.4); Thomas, the one who was lacking in faith (5.19.1); and especially Peter, who recalls his conflicts with Simon Magus (4.7.2, 6.7.4). At other times the author quotes the writings of the New Testament as if the apostles themselves were simply speaking the words (as opposed to him, the author, quoting texts); or he speaks of personal episodes rather than

quotations of Scripture, as in 2.46: "It is also a duty to forgive each other's trespasses,… as the Lord determined when I Peter asked Him, 'How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him'"; or 5:7: "He … sent a piece of money out of a fish's mouth by me Peter…."

The point of all this heightened first-person narrative is occasionally hammered home, in case readers are too dull to figure it out for themselves: "We who have eaten and drunk with Him, and have been spectators of His wonderful works, and of His life, and of His conduct, and of His words, and of His sufferings…. We teach you all these things which he appointed us by His Constitutions" (5.7).

Scholars have long questioned whether the final document was compiled over time by a number of editors, or instead was the product of a single redactor's work. An early proponent of multiple redactors was Johann Sebastian von Drey in 1829;[49] the consensus today, however, leans toward a single redactor, for compelling reasons that are, however, of little moment for our present concerns.[50] There is also a strong consensus that the final product was made in Syria, probably Antioch, at the end of the fourth century. That date would accommodate the discussion of the minor church offices (subdeacon, reader, singer, deaconess, etc.) in 8.12 and, in particular, the list of festivals that includes Christmas in 5.13, since Chrysostom indicates in a homily of 386 CE that the Christmas festival in Antioch began to be celebrated ten years earlier.[51]

The Tendencies of the Author

There have been long, hard, protracted, and occasionally pointless arguments over the inclination of the author/final editor of the Apostolic Constitutions, especially of his theological proclivities.[52] The concern is not merely a modern one, as shown by Canon 2 of the Trullanum (692–93 CE), which was quoted at the outset of this study, but which is of sufficient relevance to warrant quoting again:

> It has also seemed good to this holy Council, that the eighty-five canons, received and ratified by the holy and blessed Fathers before us, and also handed down to us in the name of the holy and glorious Apostles should from this time forth remain firm and unshaken for the cure of souls and the healing of disorders. And in these canons

> we are bidden to receive the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles [written] by Clement. But formerly through the agency of those who erred from the faith certain adulterous matter was introduced, clean contrary to piety, for the polluting of the Church, which obscures the elegance and beauty of the divine decrees in their present form. We therefore reject these Constitutions so as the better to make sure of the edification and security of the most Christian flock; by no means admitting the offspring of heretical error, and cleaving to the pure and perfect doctrine of the Apostles.[53]

From the outset of the critical investigation, it was believed that the passages in question ("certain adulterous matter") were Arian, a view that dominated until the pivotal investigations of F. Funk, who argued that the author was in fact orthodox, with Apollinarian tendencies.[54] One upshot was that the text in its final form would likely date later than normally understood, sometime in the fifth century. Funk's view was in turn attacked by C. H. Turner, who pushed for the traditional view that the author/editor was Arian,[55] a view supported in the next generation with additional argumentation by Bernard Capelle.[56] Later still, in 1972, Georg Wagner claimed specifically that the author was a neo-Arian of the Eunomian type, that in fact Eunomius was the possible author.[57]

A different approach to studying the theological comments of the author/redactor involved making a more precise identification by associating him with other writings from the same period. In particular it had been argued as far back as James Ussher in 1644 that the author of the Apostolic Constitutions also forged the Pseudo-Ignatian letters.[58] Objections were raised to the identification over the years, but the view was put on firmer ground by the great Harnack.[59]

The conclusion was made even more certain by Dieter Hagedorn, who, in a 1973 edition of a late-fourth-century Arian commentary on the book of Job, explored thirty-five points of contact that it shared with the Apostolic Constitutions.[60] On some occasions, in dealing with the same topics, the two works use precisely the same somewhat unusual phrases. Hagedorn pointed to three explanations that could be adduced for these parallels: the two (different) authors used the same source; or one of them edited the

work of the other; or they were the same person. He went on to argue that the final option was most plausible.[61]

One significant result of this conclusion is that the author of the Job commentary actually identifies himself. He was named Julian. Whoever Julian was, he also compiled the Apostolic Constitutions and forged the Pseudo-Ignatian letters. And from the Job commentary there can be little doubt about his theological views. He was, in Hagedorn's view, strongly "Arian."[62]

At the same time, it should be stressed that the inability of scholars to mount a compelling and definitive demonstration of the theological tendencies of the Apostolic Constitutions themselves, based simply on the surviving text, shows that the author—probably Julian—did not have a distinctively theological agenda to promote in this particular writing, even though his theological views may have crept into the text at points. That is to say, he forged this writing—it is a redactional forgery—for reasons other than theology. This too is the conclusion of Marcel Metzger, editor of the three-volume edition for the Sources Chrétienne.[63]

Metzger's reasoning is compelling. The compiler of the work prefers to use biblical rather than philosophical terminology: terms such as οὐσία, πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις, and their adjectives are missing from the account, as are the terms typically used in the Trinitarian controversies, such as ὁμοούσιος, ὁμοιούσιος, ἀνόμοιος, etc. Moreover, the author leaves out all incontestably "Arian" theological terms and phrases, and does not provide any trace of a polemic against Nicene orthodoxy. These linguistic facts are hard to explain if the writing was, in fact, meant to serve as a piece of Arian propaganda. Instead, the polemical emphasis, in Metzger's opinion, resides in what we earlier considered, an attack on Judaism and Jewish Christianity, or more specifically against views such as those found in the Pseudo-Clementines. In Metzger's opinion, the theology of the book, when examined in se, is simply some form of late Origenism.[64]

This view did not go down well with reviewers who had difficulty believing that an Arian might well be interested in discussing something other than Christology—such as church liturgy, church offices, and church discipline. And so, T. Kopecek complains that Metzger devotes only thirty pages of his introduction to a discussion of the theology of the Apostolic Constitutions, but twice as many to an account of its institutional and

liturgical descriptions.[65] In response it might be pointed out that this is, after all, what the book is: a church order, not a theological treatise.

If Julian did not forge the Apostolic Constitutions as an "Arian" apologia, why did he stress his alleged apostolic credentials—far more than his most extensive source, the forged Didascalia, let alone the anonymous Didache and the Apostolic Tradition? The obvious response is that he wants to stress that his views about church structure and administration come with direct apostolic authority: "When ye have learned this constitution from us, ye who are ordained bishops by us at the command of Christ, may perform all things according to the commands delivered you, knowing that he that heareth us heareth Christ, and he that heareth Christ heareth His God and Father" (8.3.2). It is hard to appeal to greater authority than that.

In a sense Julian takes the matter further than his predecessors. As seen, a book like the Didascalia uses Scripture to support its own apostolic claims, showing that the apostles who produced the sacred texts are now speaking with an equally authoritative voice in this text. Julian, on the other hand, has the apostles declare that his own book is Scripture. As seen at the climax, in canon 85 (8.47), the Apostolic Constitutions itself is one of the books of the New Testament, as are the two books produced by its carrier and authenticator, Clement of Rome. Moreover, by warning its readers against the "spurious books of the ungodly" on two occasions (6.16.1, 8.47.60), the author assures his readers that even though there may be forged books in the names of the apostles out there, this is not one of them. This one, indeed, comes from the apostles themselves. "The warning against pseudepigraphal writings that appears twice in the Apostolic Constitution should be considered the strongest argument in favor of its authenticity."[66]

The Apostolic Church Orders

Date and Character

The Apostolic Church Orders was first published in 1692 by J. Leutholf, from the Ethiopic, with a Latin translation, in *Iobi Ludolfi (alias Leutholf dicti) ad suam Historiam Aethiopicam antehac editam Commentarius*.[67] J. W. Bickell published the Greek text, with German translation, 150 years later.[68] The most recent edition is by Alistair Stewart-Sykes.[69]

Although, as Steimer indicates, there is a broad consensus that locates the Apostolic Church Orders to the first part of the fourth century,[70] the consensus has been challenged by Stewart-Sykes, who argues that the nature of the polemic suggests a date (of the final redaction) a century earlier: "200–235 would be a reasonable suggestion."[71]

The work is a composite text consisting of a two-ways teaching similar to that found in the Didache, but placed on the pens of the twelve apostles (chs. 1–15),[72] followed by a brief church order that deals with the appointment, qualifications, and duties of church officers (bishop, presbyters, readers, deacons, widows), as well as of laity and women (chs. 16–30), also given in first-person narrative by the apostles.[73] Stewart-Sykes, as is his wont, provides a complex source and redactional analysis. An earlier influential assessment of sources was made by Adolf Harnack.[74]

The Pseudepigraphic Character and Polemic

The forger opens his account by making an apostolic claim: "In accordance with the command of our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior we gathered ourselves together as he laid down for us" (ch. 1).[75] The first-person narrative recurs throughout the text until the end: "Peter said: 'Brothers, we do not command these things as those who have the power to compel, but as having a command from the Lord'" (ch. 30). Several oddities have frequently been noted in the list of apostolic names given in the Preface: both Cephas and Peter appear, as do both Nathaniel and Bartholomew. Moreover, even though twelve names are listed, only eleven apostles are given speaking roles in what follows. The exception is Jude the son of James. Stewart-Sykes follows T. Schermann in thinking Jude was a late addition to the text by a final redactor.[76]

The only real polemic of the text appears in the strong emphasis placed on the minimal role to be filled by women in the church. Apart from the laity in general, they are the only group discussed that is not to be involved with church offices, and the restrictions placed on them are made quite plain. The discussion begins in chapter 24 with Andrew urging the apostles "to establish ministry for the women." Peter suggests they consider the eucharist (ch. 25) and John points out that at the Last Supper, Jesus "did not permit the women to stand alongside of us." Martha had said it was because

Jesus had seen Mary smiling, but Mary indicates that she did not, in fact, laugh. Instead, Jesus had previously said "that the weak would be saved through the strong" (ch. 26). Cephas states that women are to pray sitting on the ground, instead of standing—possibly in order to differentiate them from the men (ch. 27).[77] James concludes that the only ministry women can have is "the ministry of supporting women in need" (ch. 28).[78]

Although the discussion is not extensive—the treatise itself is quite short—it does appear that the work, like the Didascalia, is concerned to restrict carefully what women can do in liturgical service. Unlike the Didascalia, there is no office of widow or deaconess here. Possibly this text is earlier. It is certainly less detailed. Stewart-Sykes argues that the injunctions concerning women in chapters 24–28 were added by a final redactor to a previously existing church order, with one purpose: "The whole point of the discussion is to subordinate women's ministry, and in particular to legislate against women's participation in the celebration of the eucharist."[79]

It is interesting to see Mary and Martha mentioned in the context of a discussion of women's role at the eucharist. As Francois Bovon has pointed out, both women appear at the eucharist in the Acts of Philip 8.2, where Mary prepares the bread and salt for the meal and Martha ministers to the crowds.[80] Stewart-Sykes concludes that the passage "seems directly to speak to the situation envisaged by K [=Apostolic Church Orders], to the extent that we may suggest that K is a direct response to the liturgical role of women presupposed by Acts of Philip."[81] He goes on to suggest that the author knew of Montanist groups, with women officers, and such Gnostic groups as produced the writings connected with Mary Magdalene, and he ponders whether the final redactor "is alarmed by the situation that obtains and, rather than recognizing that this is ancient tradition, believes this to be a Gnostic innovation, so using Gnostic tools (the dialogue) and anti-Gnostic tools (apostolicity) to oppose it."[82]

Faivre agrees, concluding that in view of the role mapped out for women in the treatise, the pseudepigraphic authorship plays a decisive role in the theological claims of the text. The attribution of the church order to the apostles establishes the antiquity of the contents of the books, provides literary unity for the material, and "above all … gives to more recent materials an authority equal to that of authentic materials."[83]

FORGED REVELATORY TEXTS

Several forged texts that can be grouped together as "revelatory" also reflect internal Christian debates over church organization and leadership. These documents all appear to have been forged, in part, to oppose aspects of proto-orthodox forms of Christianity. Two of these texts come to us from the Nag Hammadi Library; the other is one we have already considered in the context of anti-Jewish polemic in Chapter Eleven, the Ascension of Isaiah.

The Ascension of Isaiah

As we have seen, the Ascension of Isaiah contains certain motifs otherwise widely associated with Gnostics, in particular, the ascent and descent of the Beloved, who changes into a new shape in each realm of the heavens and delivers the passwords necessary to be granted passage. On the whole, however, the book appears to be most closely aligned with proto-orthodox theological views, even if Darrell Hannah is right that these views are somewhat "naïve."[84] Included in a vision narrated in the opening section of the book (the Martyrdom of Isaiah) is a polemical passage that appears to be directed against the leaders of the author's community, who are maligned for downplaying the importance of prophecy for the life of the church, presumably in favor of more worldly oriented hierarchy such as eventually came to dominate the orthodox tradition (3:21–31).

Robert Hall has argued that in this polemic the Ascension reflects competition among various prophetic groups in its community. For him, the text "issues from an early Christian prophetic school in conflict with other similar early Christian groups."[85] In fact, however, there is little in the text to suggest that the controversy was between prophetic groups; on the contrary, the polemic appears to be directed against a (majority) group that spurns the prophetic activities of the author and his smaller community.

The passage in question is preceded by a summary of an Isaianic vision of the Beloved's descent, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, followed by the coming of the Holy Spirit (3.13–20). We are then told that "afterwards, when he is at hand, his disciples will forsake the teachings of the twelve apostles" (3.21).[86] The main problem in the life of the community will be its leaders: "many who will love office though they are

devoid of wisdom" (3.23). Indeed, "many elders will be lawless and violent shepherds to their sheep…. They will have no holy shepherds" (3.24). The leaders will be covetous; and there will be "much slandering and boasting" (3.26). More important, "there will not be many prophets nor such as speak reliable words, except a few here and there" (3.27). As a result, "great discord will arise among them" (3.29). And possibly most significant of all, they "will set aside the prophecies of the prophets which were before me and also pay no attention to these my visions" (3.31).

The first-person narrator here, of course, is Isaiah, and it is passages such as these that make the work an embedded forgery, as discussed earlier. The polemic of the passage is directed against church leaders who reject the authority of prophecy, both the visions of this Isaiah and of the other prophets of the church that arose before him.[87]

It is interesting to observe, in this connection, the movement away from charismatic authority in some proto-orthodox writings that discuss church leadership and organization. The Pastoral epistles, obviously reflect a very different ecclesial situation from, say, the Corinthian correspondence. In Corinth, the church was organized and run by those endowed with spiritual gifts given at baptism, including such revelatory powers as prophecy and speaking in tongues. Not so for the Pastorals, where the right to direct the church comes through the laying on of hands by the elders, given to those who meet certain standards and qualifications. Even the "prophetic utterances" that "pointed to" Timothy are ratified and brought under control of the "council of elders" through some kind of ritual of ordination (1 Tim. 4:14). Direction for this community comes from "scripture … preaching … teaching" (1 Tim. 4:13), not through relatively uncontrolled and uncontrollable prophetic utterance. Presupposed here is a hierarchical structure, which saw the apostle as the one ultimately in charge, then his appointed delegate, and then the ordained bishop and deacons. Such a community has scant space for ecstatic utterance or visions to guide the life of the community, and it is not a stretch to imagine that the hierarchy was put in place precisely to provide controls for the kind of organizational chaos that could erupt under a more charismatic system, as indeed did erupt in the community at Corinth in Paul's time. The Ascension of Isaiah appears to be reacting to this kind of relatively new "system," so that we are well served seeing in it a counterforgery, in the strong sense, to the forged

apostolic authorizations of church structure such as seen in the Pastoral epistles.

We can see the same movement toward hierarchical structure play itself out, more or less before our eyes, in the Didache. For this community there continue to be charismatic prophets who visit the churches from outside and give it instructions. But they are to be treated gingerly, and at this stage of the community's history, somewhat skeptically (Didache 11–13). This is a different community from both those of the Pastorals and of the Ascension of Isaiah. But the same mechanics are involved in the development away from charisma and toward hierarchy. It is particularly striking in this connection that although the Didachist entertains healthy doubts about the viability of charismatic directives for the church, it also issues instructions for the community to appoint bishops and deacons (ch. 15), who presumably would be permanent and grounded fixtures, as opposed to the wandering charismatics who were clearly being seen already as a problem.

The Ascension of Isaiah then presents a kind of counterattack against this move toward orthodox hierarchy. The settled, antiprophetic leadership of the church is peopled by covetous, boastful, and envious leaders who are "devoid of wisdom" and who move the community in the wrong direction. God speaks through the prophets—not merely the prophets of old, such as Isaiah, but through the prophets of the present day, who have visions of God and learn the truths necessary for the proper guidance of the community.

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter appears as tractate 3 in codex 7 of the Nag Hammadi Library. It can probably be dated to the early third century.[88] We will be looking at the work in greater length in the next chapter, since the principle thrust of its polemic involves its negative views of the flesh, over against the proto-orthodox insistence on the fleshly existence of both Christ and his followers. But there are also clear polemical charges leveled against the church hierarchy that this author, and his community, rejected, a hierarchy that has every appearance of being a majority, proto-orthodox church structure.

The Anti-Institutional Polemic

The author identifies himself as Jesus' own disciple at the outset of the treatise: "He said to me, Peter …" (7.70.20).[89] It is interesting to note the clear parallels between this Petrine forgery and others that are still preserved. The concluding portion of the treatise is its most famous feature, an eyewitness account of the crucifixion of Jesus, with a decidedly Gnostic twist. One cannot help but recall the words of the earlier forger of 1 Peter, who declared that he was "a witness to Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet. 5:1). The parallels with 2 Peter are particularly numerous, as I will note in a moment.

The author of the account admits that only a few of his readers will acknowledge his revelation and so come to saving knowledge. As the Savior tells him, "From you I have established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge" (71.19–20). Those without this knowledge are "blind ones who have no guide" (72.12–13). It is, in other words, the revelatory vision of Peter, not the church leaders, that is to lead the people. And so we learn that those who teach the community, the priests and scribes who praise the Savior, are "blind and deaf" (73.13–14). They think they are praising the Savior but they are instead blaspheming.

And they welcome as their followers those who "praise the men of the propagation of falsehood, those who will come after you" (74.10–12). These would be Peter's supposed successors, who were presumably the leaders of the churches in his wake. But the members of the community "will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error and into the hand of an evil cunning man and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled heretically" (74.16–23). Moreover, "some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching" (74.22–25).

These church leaders proclaim what they think is truth, but they misunderstand what it is they preach; at the same time, they arrogantly think they have a corner on the truth: "some who do not understand mystery speak of things which they do not understand, but they will boast that the mystery of the truth is theirs alone" (76.27–34). What is more, "many others who oppose the truth and are the messengers of error, will set up their error and their law against these pure thoughts of mine.… They do business in my word" (77.22–78.1). The author then moves to specifics, making it perfectly clear that he has been referring to the appointed leaders of the (proto-orthodox) churches: "And there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishop and also deacons, as if

they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgment of the leaders. Those people are dry canals" (79.22–31).

These appointed officers of the church will be hugely successful. Peter fears that "there are multitudes that will mislead other multitudes of living ones, and destroy them among themselves. And when they speak your name they will be believed" (80.3–7). To this the Savior responds: "for a time determined for them in proportion to their error they will rule over the little ones" (80.8–11). But these leaders "say evil things against each other" (74.26–27) and they "are divided among themselves" (82.33).

The Targets of the Polemic

There is strong disagreement among scholars whether the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, in its entirety, is directed against only one set of enemies or is, instead, fighting battles on numerous fronts, with three or even as many as seven opposing groups in view.[90] What can be said, clearly, is that the main enemy of its polemic in the portions just cited is the proto-orthodox church structure with its bishops and deacons (and, as we will see in Chapter Thirteen, with its doctrine of crucifixion rooted in an understanding of the need for Christ actually to have died in the flesh for salvation). How does one explain this anti-ecclesiastical rhetoric precisely on the pen of Peter, chief of Jesus' disciples, allegedly first bishop of Rome and hero of the proto-orthodox community?

The foundational study of the polemic of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, still very much worth reading more than thirty years on, is Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum*.[91] Koschorke argued that there are seven groups attacked in various portions of the text, but that they all can be subsumed under one major group, which consists of the leaders of the proto-orthodox churches. At stake ultimately is the struggle between the two groups, the Petrine Gnostics on one hand and the leaders of the proto-orthodox churches on the other. This is a battle over winning support from the masses of Christians.

Henriette Havelaar goes a step farther, arguing that the community behind the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter was a splinter group from the proto-orthodox majority, a group that started out within the community, developed "aberrant" views, was excluded from the community, developed these views further, and then entered into a polemical exchange with the larger

group. Although Havelaar does not draw attention to the similarities, the model is highly reminiscent of the views of the Johannine community and its secessionists mapped out by J. Louis Martyn and Raymond Brown.[92] The model, in this case, would explain why both communities make use of similar traditions. The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, like proto-orthodox writings, uses a good number of the books that later became part of the New Testament; it focuses on the passion narrative and stresses the relationship between Peter and Jesus. At the same time, there are striking differences, precisely at the places of overlap, for example in the value of church offices and in the reality of the flesh and fleshly suffering of Jesus.

An even more specific proposal has been developed by Birger Pearson, who takes up the argument of Terrence Smith that there is a direct literary relationship between the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter and the pseudepigraphic 2 Peter.[93] Pearson maintains that Smith is wrong to think that the Apocalypse is a direct polemic against 2 Peter (if it were, it would be a counterforgery in the strong sense); instead he thinks the Apocalypse is reading the book of 2 Peter in a Gnostic way, appropriating its message, sympathetically, in a different context.[94]

In particular, Pearson is impressed by the fact that the Apocalypse portrays Peter as "the founder of the Gnostic community and the chief protagonist in a struggle against orthodox ecclesiastical Christianity." This is Peter, the founder of the Roman church, of all people.[95] It is also striking that the work makes extensive use of materials drawn, evidently, from the Gospel of Matthew, which was otherwise used to establish Peter as the "rock" of the Catholic church.[96] But there are especially striking verbal parallels with 2 Peter, which Pearson lists at length. Most intriguing is the polemic against church leaders as "dry canals" (79.30–31), strikingly close to 2 Peter's polemic against those who "are waterless springs" (2:17). In Pearson's view, the author of the Coptic Apocalypse has slightly modified the image in light of "an Egyptian geographical environment."[97]

One is also struck by the "strong eschatological expectation" of the Coptic Apocalypse, which may not be expected in a Gnostic work. But judgment is said to come on the false teachers at the parousia; and nowhere is the parousia more in evidence than in 2 Peter. "Now we have a Gnostic text that not only contains a vigorous eschatological expectation but even uses 2 Peter itself in giving expression to it." Pearson cites a number of

other parallels between the two texts as well, and concludes that the author of the Coptic Apocalypse has found 2 Peter "a very congenial piece of Petrine teaching, one that can freely be used in his own presentation of Petrine *gnosis*."[98]

The Coptic Apocalypse does not engage with polemic against the views of 2 Peter, however; instead, it uses the language and images of 2 Peter in order to attack the proto-orthodox ecclesiastical establishment. Here we have two Petrine forgeries, one building on the other and interpreting it in its own context in order to attack Christians who also use Peter for precisely the opposite purpose, to justify the church hierarchy that was destined to prevail within the early Christian movement. The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, then, is a minority voice in the struggle to establish dominance within the broader community. Its protests went virtually unheard, as the church refused to move away from a hierarchical organization, but in just the opposite direction, as Peter came to be thought of as the head of the church or Rome, the leader of all the churches of Christendom. It was the "dry canals" that won the day, and the Peter of orthodoxy who triumphed over the Peter of the Gnostics.[99]

The Paraphrase of Shem

The Paraphrase of Shem, the first tractate in Nag Hammadi codex 7, is another Gnostic apocalypse, although there are debates over its particular Gnostic allegiances. Given our limited knowledge of the followers of Basilides, it is difficult to conclude with M. Tardieu that the text is best understood as a Basilidean production.[100] The view of Michel Roberge appears more credible, that even though the author "follows his own way," he appears to have been heavily influenced by both Sethian and Valentinian systems, the latter, in particular, because he embraces a tripartite anthropology comprising psychics, noetics, and pneumatics.[101]

The revelation in the text is delivered by the son of infinite Light, Derdekeas, to Shem, the son of Noah. For our purposes, it is important that the account is written in the first person, allegedly by Shem himself, "The paraphrase about the unbegotten Spirit—what Derdekeas revealed to me, Shem…. My thought in my body snatched me away from my race and carried me up to the summit of creation…. I heard a voice speaking to me,

Shem, since you are from pure power…." (1.1–19).[102] Like other apocalypses, in other words, this is pseudepigraphic. The revelation involves both a Gnostic cosmogony and anthropogony, but then moves to a historical description of key salvific events: the flood, the overthrow of Sodom, the baptism of the Savior, and his ascent at the crucifixion, ending in two eschatological discourses and a description of Shem's ascent to the planetary spheres.

Of particular interest is the polemic of the work, which begins in 30.4–31.14 with the appearance of the "demon" who comes "to baptize with an imperfect baptism and to disturb the world with bondage of water." This is none other than John the Baptist, whose water baptism is a baptism "in error" and is described as "the baptism of the demon." This denigration of John's baptism sets up the discourse directed against the church's practices of baptism.

The polemical character of the account is evident in a revelation of Derdekeas to Shem in 34.16–36.24: "Many in the generation of Nature will seek the security of power, but they will not find it, nor will they be able to fulfill the will of Faith. For they are the seed of universal Darkness" (35.7–13). In contrast are "the perceptive." As Derdekeas reveals "I disclosed to them all the concepts and teaching of the righteous" (36.9–11). The others —those who are not perceptive and are tied to "the flesh"—will be led astray, thinking that baptism in water will save them. This becomes clear in the disparagement of Christian baptism by Derdekeas:

> Then many who wear flesh that leads them astray will descend into the harmful waters by means of the winds and the demons, and they are bound with the water. But water will provide an ineffective treatment. It will mislead and bind the world…. O Shem, people are deceived by the many forms of demons, and they think that through the baptism of unclean water this substance that is dark, feeble, ineffective, and disturbing will take away sins. They do not know that coming from the water and going to the water are bondage, error, defilement, envy, murder, adultery, false witness, heresies, robberies, lusts, babbling, wrath, bitterness. (36.25–38.28)

The upshot of this revelation then becomes clear: "I proclaim to those who have a mind that they must abandon defiled baptism … for where water has been invoked, there is Nature with a ritual formula, a lie, and injury."

There follows a peculiar description of the beheading of a female figure "Rebouel." The gruesome act, however, is presented as a good thing. Rebouel has "the perception you will reveal upon the earth," and so Shem can proclaim, "Blessed is Rebouel among all generations of people, for you alone have seen and will listen" (40.12–15). What is the meaning of her beheading? Roberge argues, "Just as Rebouel is declared blessed in her beheading, so the noetics should not hesitate to separate from the great church (early orthodoxy) which practices baptism, and enter the community of those who possess gnosis."[103]

This, in short, is another case of Gnostic polemic against proto-orthodoxy, one that in particular rejects the practice of baptism: "the writing is best explained as the product of a group living on the fringe of Christianity and urging the members of the great church to separate and join the community of those who possess gnosis."[104] It is impossible to identify the target of the attack with any greater specificity; but it is worth noting, with J.-D. Dubois, that the polemic accords well with the two treatises that follow the Paraphrase of Shem in codex 7, the anonymous Second Treatise of the Great Seth and the forged Apocalypse of Peter, which we have already considered. In Dubois's opinion, it is probably no accident that these three polemical attacks on proto-orthodoxy are grouped together in the codex.[105]

1. See the discussion on pp. 172–74.

2. See the discussion on pp. 218–22.

3. Günter Haufe, "Gnostische Irrlehre und ihre Abwehr in den Pastoralbriefen," in *Gnosis und Neues Testament: Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, ed., Karl-Wolfgang Tröger (Güterslow: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), pp. 325–39, argued that all three were combating the same opponents, and they were Gnostic (p. 325). The most influential twentieth-century spokesperson in support of this view of the corpus Pastorale is Peter Trummer, "Corpus Paulinum—Corpus Pastorale"; for him, the Pastorals were by a single author and were meant as a conclusion for the Pauline corpus. Even more extreme is Gerd Häfner, "Das Corpus Pastorale," who argued, contrary to recent claims of such

scholars as L. T. Johnson and W. Richards, that the Pastorals were generated and were meant to be read as a corpus of writings; the corpus is not an epistolary novel, but it has some of the characteristics of the genre, and the books are to be read in the order 1 Timothy–Titus–2 Timothy. Moreover, the claim that no single opponent emerges when the three are taken together as a unit, Häfner avers, is not necessarily true. Everything said about opponents can be subsumed under some such category as "Jewish-Christian Gnosis." The idea that the letters could be read as an epistolary novel was most influentially advanced by Richard Pervo, "Romancing an Oft-Neglected Stone: The Pastoral Epistles and the Epistolary Novel," *Journal of Higher Criticism*, 1 (1994): 25–47. Among the very basic problems of the thesis was the fact that Pervo was forced to argue that the entire "genre" of epistolary novel contains but one work, the letters of Chion of Heraclea. How can there be a genre of *one* writing? (He did allow that the Socratic letters were related, but not closely.) Moreover, the differences, as Pervo pointed out, between the Pastorals and the letters of Chion are stark: the Pastorals are a good deal longer, two of the three do not carry much of the narrative, and their coherence is not progressive, sequential, and narratological. As a conclusion, Pervo states that if the author of the Pastorals wanted to write a work of the genre, he "was not very successful" (p. 40).

4. *Difference and Distance*.

5. The most careful analysis, methodologically, is Jerry Sumney, *"Servants of Satan*." See my comments on p. 215.

6. On the problem of the polemical stereotypes, see the now-classic article of Robert J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–63; and Luke Timothy Johnson, "II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Reexamination," *JRS* 6 (1978): 1–26.

7. See p. 207.

8. There is an obvious connection (although it is not as obvious what to do with it) between 1:15, πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαροῖς, and Mark 7:19, also written by a non-Jew, καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα. See also Acts 10:14–15 and Rom. 14:20.

9. See pp. 206, 211.

0. One convenient way around the problem is to think of the γύναι and ἄνδρες of the passage as husbands and wives, in view of 3:2. Still, apart from the fact that it does not let the author off the hook—even here, wives must be silent and submissive, and exercise no authority—the immediately preceding context of 3:8–9 (men and women, not husbands and wives) makes the interpretation implausible.

1. *Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen/Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Academic Press, 2004); see also her shorter study, "The Fictitious Self-Exposition of Paul: How Might Intertextual Theory Suggest a Reformulation of the Hermeneutics of Pseudepigraphy?" in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas L. Brodie et al. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 113–32.

2. Merz, "Fictitious Self-Exposition," p. 117.

3. Margaret M. Mitchell, "Corrective Composition, Corrective Exegesis: The Teaching on Prayer in 1 Tim 2, 1–15," in Karl Paul Donfried, ed., *1 Timothy Reconsidered* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), pp. 41–62.

4. The strongest arguments are that the views expressed in the verses stand at odds with Paul's overall view that women could be active in the church—as seen in his comments from Romans 16, as an obvious example—and more specifically with his exhortation earlier in chapter 11, which is reconciled with the injunctions of 14:34–35 only with severe difficulty. The fact that the passage in chapter 14 flows even better without the verses in question exacerbates the problem. But the debates rage on. For a rather weak argument that there is textual support for the omission, see Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), ad loc. A recent study that supports the view that the passage is interpolated is Pervo, *Making of Paul*, pp. 46–48, with a nice chart giving the parallels of the two passages.

5. As often noted, it is difficult to understand 3:11 as referring to anything other than women deacons, given the context of 3:8–10 on the one hand and 3:12 on the other. But why then are qualifications for the women deacons not mentioned?

6. Translation of Stephen J. Davis, "A 'Pauline' Defense of Women's Right to Baptize? Intertextuality and Apostolic Authority in the Acts of Paul," *JECS* 8 (2000): 453–59.

7. Stevan L. Davies, "Women, Tertullian and the Acts of Paul," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 139–43. His argument is that unlike what Tertullian indicates about the work produced by the Asia Minor presbyter, the surviving Acts of Paul was not written in Paul's name, does not give Thecla the right to baptize, was not written to augment Paul's fame, and did not come to be held in disgrace among the proto-orthodox circles to which Tertullian belonged. See then the responses of A. Hilhorst, "Tertullian on the Acts of Paul," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), pp. 150–63; and Willy Rordorf, "Tertullien et les Actes de Paul."
8. Hilhorst, "Tertullian on the Acts of Paul."
9. H. H. Mayer, *Über die Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913). Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).
0. In addition to MacDonald, *Legend and the Apostle*, see Richard Bauckham, "The Acts of Paul as a Sequel to Acts," *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, ed. Bruce Winter and Arthur Clark (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); pp. 105–52; and Carston Looks, *Das Anvertraute bewahren. Die Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe im 2 Jahrhundert* (Munich: Hebert Utz, 1999), pp. 435–52.
1. "Pastoralbriefe und Acta Pauli," *SE* 5 (1968): 309. Rohde goes on to argue that the AP is not necessarily polemicizing against the message of Paul in the Pastorals, since there is so little direct polemic in AP, as opposed to Pastorals. Rather than being principally polemical—even if there are anti-Gnostic traces—the legends are by and large edificatory and entertaining. Rhodes's view may be true, but there is little reason to deny that the views of the Acts are antithetical to those set forth in the Pastorals, and vice versa.
2. See note 19.
3. *Legend and the Apostle*, p. 63.
4. See note 3.
5. Depending, that is, on whether a forger can commit plagiarism, given the circumstance that he is not actually claiming someone else's work to be his own, as he is writing it in the name of another. See p. 14.
6. See Joseph Mueller, "The Ancient Church Order Literature: Genre or Tradition?" *JECS* 15 (2007): 337–80.

7. See the full study of twelve texts in B. Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*.
8. Ibid., p. 344.
9. Ibid., p. 270.
0. Georg Schöllgen, "Der Abfassungszweck der frühchristlichen Kirchenordnungen: Anmerkungen zu den Thesen Bruno Steimers," *JAC* 40 (1997): 55–77.
1. "An keiner Stelle deutlich, daß sie die Absicht haben, das Leben in ihren Gemeinden umfassend zu regeln. Von einer 'prätendierten Universalität der Ordnung' kann keine Rede sein," "Der Abfassungszweck," p. 64.
2. P. 69.
3. "Die Pseudepigraphie ist zudem ein deutliches Argument gegen die Widerspiegelungstheorie: warum sollte eine Kirchenordnung, die nichts anderes im Sinn hat, als die Gemeindepraxis zu 'verschriftlichen,' dies nicht unter dem Namen ihres tatsächlichen Verfassers bzw. seiner Gemeinde tun, statt sich in die Gefahr zu begeben als Betrugsmanöver entlarvt zu werden?" … "Die geliehene Autorität der Apostel soll der Schrift die Verbindlichkeit verleihen, die der Verfasser bei einer orthonymen Veröffentlichung nicht hätte erreichen können." Both quotations p. 76.
4. As Schöllgen argues elsewhere concerning the relationship of scripture citation and pseudepigraphic authorship in the Didascalia: "The apostolic frame obviously serves the purpose of making the Didascalia's interpretation of Scripture binding vis-à-vis competing interpretations." ("Der apostolische Rahmen dient ganz offensichtlich dem Zweck, die Schriftinterpretation der Didaskalie gegen konkurrierende Interpretationen verbindlich zu machen.") "Pseudapostolizität und Scriftgebrauch in den ersten Kirchenordnungen," in G. Schöllgen and G. Schölten, eds., *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum*. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1996), p. 117.
5. See pp. 344–50.
6. Charlotte Methuen, "Widows, Bishops and the Struggle for Authority in the *Didascalia Apostolorum," JEH* 46 (1995): 213.
7. *Didascalia*, p. 43.
8. Schöllgen, "Der Abfassungszweck," p. 68; on Osiek and Methuen, see pp. 389–90 below.

9. A “not” has inadvertently dropped out of Stewart-Sykes’s translation of 3.1.1 (“Widows who are to be appointed: should be less than fifty years of age”!).
0. Carolyn Osiek, “The Widow as Altar: The Rise and Fall of a Symbol,” *SecCent* 3 (1983): 168.
1. Methuen, “Widows, Bishops, and the Struggle for Authority,” p. 200.
2. “The Widow as Altar,” p. 168.
3. “Widows, Bishops, and the Struggle for Authority,” p. 203. Methuen argues as well that the Didascalia is specifically directing its polemic against a group of women as known from the Acts of Thomas.
4. Osiek, “The Widow as Altar,” pp. 168–69. See also Bonnie Bowman Thurston, “The Widows as the ‘Altar of God,’” SBLSP 24 (1985): 279–89.
5. See pp. 14–19.
6. For that reason I will not be giving them a separate treatment, even though they too are falsely written in the names of the apostles.
7. Thomas A. Kopecek, review of Marcel Metzger, *Les Constitutions Apostoliques*, vol. 1 in *JTS* 38 (1987): 209.
8. Translation of James Donaldson in *ANF*.
9. “Über die apostolischen Constitutionen, oder neue Untersuchungen über die Bestandtheile, Entstehung und Zusammensetzung, und den kirchlichen Werth dieser alten Schrift,” *ThQ* 11 (1829): 397–477, esp. p. 410.
0. Compiled by Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 119–20.
1. “*Hom. in diem natalem Domini nostri Jesu Christi*,” in Migne *PG* 49, 351, cited in Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 121 n. 61.
2. See Metzger, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, pp. 10–110; Metzger, “La théologie des Constitutions apostoliques par Clément,” *RevScRel* 57 (1983): 33–36; and especially Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 122–29, to whom I am especially indebted in my survey here.
3. Translation of Henry Percival from Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *NPNF*, second series, vol. 14 (reprint edition Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994; American edition original, 1900), p. 361.
4. Franz X. Funk, *Die Apostolischen Konstitutionen. Eine literar-historische Untersuchung* (Rottenburg: W. Bader, 1891), pp. 105–7, 367.
5. “Notes on the Apostolic Constitutions,” *JTS* 16 (1915): 54–61 and 523–38.
6. “Le texte du ‘Gloria in excelsis,’ *RHE* 44 (1949): 439–505.

7. “Zur Herkunft der Apostolischen Konstitutionen,” in *Mélanges liturgiques offerts au R. P. dom Bernard Botte à l’occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de son ordination sacerdotale (4 juin 1972)* (Louvain, Abbaye du Mont César, 1972). For the views of S. Schwartz and J. Lebreton, see Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 125.
8. *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644), LXIII–LXIV
9. *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1884), 244–65.
0. Dieter Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar des Arianers Julian* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).
1. P. lii.
2. See further the discussion of the Pseudo-Ignatian letters on pp. 460–80.
3. “The view that the compiler and his school took recourse to pseudepigraphy for the purpose of surreptitiously imposing Arian doctrines and formulae is untenable in light of a complete examination of the Apostolic Constitutions and the local historical context.” (“Que la compilateur et son atelier aient recouru à la pseudépigraphie pour imposer subrepticement les thèses et les formules ariennes, cette opinion ne peut tenir devant un examen complet des CA et du contexte historique local.”) *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, p. 11.
4. *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, p. 18.
5. See note 47.
6. “Als stärkstes Argument der Authentizität ist die in der CA doppelt vorkommende Warnung vor pseudepigraphischen Schriften zu werten.” Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 132–33.
7. Frankfurt am Main, 1691, pp. 304–14.
8. In *Geschichte des Kirchenrechts* 1 (Giessen, 1843), pp. 107–32.
9. *The Apostolic Church Order: The Greek Text with Introduction, Translation and Annotations* (Strath-field, Australia: St Pauls, 2006).
0. *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 65.
1. *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 78.
2. There is nothing to require Speyer’s judgment that the document was produced in order to replace the Didache. Instead, it simply gives the Two

Ways teaching a different iteration, and combines it with a church order. See Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung* p. 223.

3. Faivre attempts to find clever connections between what each apostle says and what is known about that apostle from other sources ("Apostolicité et pseudo-apostolicité dans la 'Constitution ecclésiastique des apôtres': L'art de faire parler les origines," *RevScRel* 66, 1992, 19–67). Thus, for example, Cephas speaks about the role of women in part because in 1 Cor. 9:5 he is connected with a wife; and Andrew talks about the symbolic theological connection of the deaconate between men (ΑΝΔΡΑΕΙ) and women. In most instances, including these two, the connections appear to be a considerable stretch and fail to convince.
4. *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*, pp. 210–16.
5. Translations are taken from Stewart-Sykes, *Apostolic Church Order*.
6. T. Schermann, *Eine Elfapostelmoral oder die x-Rezension der "beiden Wege"* (Munich: Lentner 1903); Stewart-Sykes, *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 34.
7. Stewart-Sykes conjectures that the text originally involved an injunction for the women not to prophesy standing, lest they become physically out of control; *Apostolic Church Order*, pp. 113–14, n. 46.
8. Stewart-Sykes proposes an alternative translation, "supporting women in chains," and suggests that if followed the passage may refer to some kind of exorcistic ministry, a view he then rejects.
9. *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 49. It should be noted that the polemic is not an assertion of too much authority exercised specifically by deaconesses, as Jean Daniélou suggested (*The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, London: Faith Press, 1961, p. 20). As Roger Gryson pointed out (*The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976, p. 48), deaconesses are not mentioned here. The office of deaconess instead may have emerged from just the roles to which women were restricted in documents such as this.
0. "Mary Magdalene in the Acts of Philip," in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*, ed. F. Stanley Jones (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 82–83.
1. *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 53.
2. Ibid., p. 54.

3. “Surtout, elle donne aux matériaux plus récents une autorité égale à celle des matériaux authentiques,” “Apostolicité et pseudo-apostolicité,” pp. 64, 66.
4. See pp. 335–37.
5. Robert G. Hall, “The *Ascension of Isaiah:* Community Situation, Date, and Place in Early Christianity,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 289. Hall provides an interesting assessment of the text, but much of it comes through a rather flat mirror reading, in which any description of Isaiah and his school is taken to refer to the prophetic author and his real-life school. This is taking the approach developed by J. Louis Martyn for his reading of the Fourth Gospel to an extreme (see Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, New York: Harper and Row, 1968). For critique, see Greg Carey, “The Ascension of Isaiah: An Example of Early Christian Narrative Polemic,” *JSP* 17 (1998): 65–78.
6. Translation of C. Detlef G. Müller, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.
7. It appears less likely that the author is objecting to the leaders rejecting the writings of the Old Testament prophets, since the focus is on “these my visions”—that is, the visions recorded in this very book, and hence specifically “Christian” prophecy made in the names of the prophets of old.
8. Thus Henriette W. Havelaar, ed., *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter (Nag-Hammadi Codex VII, 3)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999).
9. Translations are those of James Brashler and Roger A. Bullard in Robinson, *NHL*.
0. See Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, ch. 6. For an argument that seven heretical groups are under attack, and that the polemic against the bishop and deacons is specifically directed against a Manichaean group, see Michel Tardieu, “Hérésiographie de l’Apocalypse de Pierre,’ in *Histoire et conscience historique dans les civilisations du Proche-Orient ancient* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), pp. 33–39.
1. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
2. On Martyn, *History and Theology;* Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979).
3. Birger A. Pearson, “The Apocalypse of Peter and the Canonical 2 Peter,” in *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World*, ed. James Goehring et al. (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990), pp. 67–74; in reference to Terrence

V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985), pp. 43–54, 137–41.

4. Havelaar is not convinced that there is any relationship between the two works at all. *Coptic Apocalypse*, ch. 5.
5. Pearson, "Apocalypse of Peter," p. 68.
6. For use of NT materials in the Apocalypse of Peter, see Havelaar, *Coptic Apocalypse*, ch. 5.
7. P. 71.
8. P. 71.
9. Some scholars have argued that the Apocryphon of James from codex 1 of the Nag Hammadi Library has a polemical bent similar to the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter. Madeleine Scopello in particular has urged that the figure of Peter in the text is portrayed as a somewhat dull and unreceptive recipient of Jesus' revelation, in contrast to the hero of the text, James. In this view, the ultimate point of the text is that Gnostics require no intermediaries for salvation, unlike the members of the proto-orthodox church, who require the ecclesiastical structure to be saved. This may, however, be an overreading of the book in a polemical direction not warranted by the text itself. (Madeleine Scopello, "The Secret Book of James," Introduction in Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 19–22.) By contrast, see also Donald Rouleau, *L'Épître apocryphe de Jacques (NH I, 2)*, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Textes" 18 (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain: Peeters, 1987), pp. 25–27, who stresses that in the account, Peter as well as James is set apart by Jesus to receive his revelation, and they both receive it equally; the other disciples ask both of them what the revelation was at the end, and they both reply and give the right answer. It is true that Peter betrays a misunderstanding of Jesus, but James too is represented as not comprehending Jesus and his message (chs. 5–6).
00. "Commemoration gnostique de Sem." In *La commemoration*, ed. Ph. Gignoux (Louvain: Peeters, 1988), pp. 219–23. Tardieu dates the text to the end of the fourth century, as an attack on the post-Constantinian church.
01. "The Paraphrase of Shem," in Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 437–47.
02. Translations are taken from Roberge, "Paraphrase of Shem."

03. Ibid., p. 445.

04. P. 445. Roberge goes on to make the less plausible suggestion that the polemic may instead have focused on Elchasaites, with their practice of multiple baptisms and therapeutic baths.

05. J.-D. Dubois, “Contribution à l’interprétation de la Paraphrase de Sem,” *Deuxième journée d’études coptes* (Louvain: Peeters, 1986), pp. 150–60.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Forgeries Involving Debates over the Flesh

None of the theological controversies of the second and third Christian centuries was as heated or prolonged as the debate over the status of the flesh, both the real flesh of Jesus before and after his resurrection and the flesh of his followers, alternately spurned and embraced by Christians of varying persuasion. The debates over the flesh were carried out not only in the realm of the heresiological literature—with famous stands taken by such stalwart advocates of orthodoxy as Irenaeus and Tertullian—but also within a surprising number of forged texts from the period. We have, as a result, apostolic pseudepigrapha that take positions on both ends of the spectrum, some arguing against the "grotesque" notion that Christ was a man of real flesh and that his resurrection—and that of his followers—involved a reanimation of the flesh, and others arguing with equal vehemence the opposite view, that Christ's incarnation was fully in the flesh, as was his resurrection, in anticipation of the fleshly resurrection of his followers, yet to be. As might be expected, we have fewer surviving representatives of the former position, in no small measure because its supporters succumbed and their literary advocacies were, as a result, relegated to the trash heaps of perverse theological curiosities. We begin with these few apostolic denigrations of the flesh.

FORGERIES THAT OPPOSE THE FLESH

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

I have already discussed one important aspect of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter in the preceding chapter, as this striking revelation to Peter of the true nature of the crucifixion of Jesus was written, in no small measure, to oppose the hierarchical developments within the proto-orthodox community. The treatise attacks not only church leaders, however, but also anyone who maintains that Christ was really a man of the flesh, whose bodily torment and death had any role to play in human salvation. It is no

accident that the separationist Christology of the text—in which a clear demarcation is made between the fleshly shell of the Savior and his true inner essence—is placed on the pen of Peter, otherwise celebrated as the leader of the proto-orthodox community that this author opposes.

Peter and True Insight

The Petrine authorship of the book is established in its opening sentence, "As the Savior was sitting in the temple … he said to me, 'Peter, blessed are those above belonging to the Father. …'"[1] One is immediately drawn to parallels in the canonical traditions, especially the apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13, given at the explicit request of Peter and other disciples while overlooking the Temple. The connections to 1 Peter (whose author was "a witness to Christ's sufferings") and yet more extensively 2 Peter, have already been discussed.

Early on in the treatise the polemical tone is set. It is the ones who "belong to the Father" who are blessed; and Peter is reminded that the Savior intended that those "who are from the life … may hear my word and distinguish words of unrighteousness and transgression of law from righteousness" (70.24–32). And so there is a clear difference between the true teaching of the Savior and teachings that derive from elsewhere. So too these sundry teachings differentiate groups of alleged followers from one another. Only a few (the "remnant") hear the true revelation of Christ and so come to saving knowledge: "From you I have established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge" (71.19–21). Those without this knowledge are "blind ones who have no guide" (72.12–13). These "others" are polemicized against throughout: they "say evil things against each other" (74.26–27) and "are divided among themselves" (82.33). The object of attack, as we have seen, is the proto-orthodox community headed by the deceived "bishops and deacons" (79.25–26).

The group is misguided not only because they follow blind leaders who are "dry canals" (79.31) but even more because they subscribe to false views, insisting on the importance of the fleshly body of Christ and on the salvific significance of his death. Looking only to the externals, they do not see the true, inner, hidden meaning of both Christ and his crucifixion. To illustrate this problem at the outset, the author presents the strange scene in which the Savior instructs Peter to see precisely by putting his hands over

his eyes, and to hear by placing his hands over his ears (72.10–73.22). After an initial confusion, Peter comes to understand the point. What seems to be happening in the physical world of sensation in fact masks what is really happening, as can be detected not through the physical senses, which need to be obliterated, but through spiritual insight, which comes only when one turns from the outward and physical. Only some people can see: those who abandon the importance of flesh and the physical nature of existence. It is those who look with their physical eyes who are blind ("If you want to know their blindness, put your hands upon your eyes … and say what you see"; 72.13–17).

The Christological Polemic

The primary target of the author's polemic is the false teaching about the importance of Christ's (real) death. The blind leaders of the opposition, and their followers, called the "men of the propagation of falsehood" err because they "cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking that they will become pure" (74.11–15). That is to say, they think that it is the crucifixion that brings salvation (the dead Jesus instead of the living one). On the contrary, those who hold such views "will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error and into the hand of an evil cunning man and a manifold dogma and they will be ruled heretically" (74.16–22).

The alternative Christology proposed by the author is not, strictly speaking, docetic (i.e. phantasmal), but separationist, in which the outer shell of the man Jesus, which gets crucified, is of no ultimate significance for salvation; it is the real Jesus, the inner spiritual being, that matters.[2] That the suffering of the shell has no connection with the real savior is a view found in other Nag Hammadi treatises as well, including the First Apocalypse of James (5.3, 5.31.17–18), the Second Apocalypse of James (5.4), and the Letter of Peter to Philip (8.2).[3] The view is portrayed with particular poignancy here, in the famous culminating scene of the tractate, where Peter observes the crucifixion of Jesus from afar, while speaking to the Savior:

> When he had said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said, "What do I see, O Lord, that it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is

> this one glad and laughing [above] the tree. And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?"
>
> The Savior said to me, "He whom you saw [above] the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute, being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness." (81.3–23)

To his increased amazement, Peter then sees "someone about to approach us resembling him, even him who was laughing." This one was filled "with a Holy Spirit" and is also said to be the Savior. "And there was a great ineffable light around them and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels blessing them." This one—seemingly yet another image of Christ—explains:

> He whom they crucified is the first-born, and the home of demons, and the stony vessel in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross, which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma. (82.4–83.13)

There are numerous well-known ambiguities about this passage. Among other things, although interpreters are broadly agreed that there is a clear and fundamental distinction made between the material body of Christ and his real spiritual self, there are strong disagreements about the nature and unity of the latter, with some scholars such as Luttikhuizen thinking that it (the nonmaterial part) consists of two essences, corresponding more or less to soul and spirit, and others such as Havelaar who speak of a "tripartite Savior," comprising the "intellectual Pleroma," the "intellectual or Holy Spirit" and the "incorporeal body or living Savior" that is connected to the material body.[4] This disagreement is not of vital significance for my

purposes here. What matters instead is the differentiation drawn between the material part of Christ, which is crucified, and the spiritual part(s), which cannot and do not suffer. The fleshly part of Christ is "the home of demons" and belongs to "Elohim" the creator God of this world. It is of no real importance to the living Jesus. Those who think they can harm the living Jesus are "blind" and do not "know what they are saying" (81.30–32). That is why the Savior "laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are blind" (83.1–3). The opponents of Christ think they have destroyed the Savior, but in fact they have only put themselves to shame. It is not the fleshly body of Jesus—and thus his physical death—that ultimately matters. That was a charade. What matters is the inner Jesus, the spiritual Savior who escapes torment and cannot be killed.

So too with the followers of the Savior. Their material flesh is not what matters. What matters is the spirit within. And so, as Havelaar notes, the crucifixion of Jesus is "an example of the repudiation of the material world."[5]

One of the striking features of the passage is the Savior who laughs at his own crucifixion. We meet this image elsewhere, most notably in the Gospel of Basilides, unfortunately no longer extant, but mentioned by Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer*. 1.24.4), and in the Second Treatise of the Great Seth (7.62.27–64.20). The idea that the Savior could be killed was, for many Gnostics, completely risible. Jesus laughs for other, but related, reasons four times in the Gospel of Judas. A comparable motif occurs in the "Gnostic" chapters of the Acts of John, where John is portrayed as laughing at the wooden cross. A similar view, without such humor, occurs in the Letter of Peter to Philip, which insists that Jesus was "a stranger to these sufferings" (8.139.21–11). As with this final instance, the authority of such views was significantly heightened when expressed not simply as a trustworthy revelation of secret knowledge, but pseudepigraphically in the name of one who would know. In the Coptic Apocalypse it is to Simon Peter, Jesus' closest disciple, the foundation on which, allegedly, the (proto-orthodox) church was built, that Jesus reveals his true spiritual nature and the complete insignificance of his material, fleshly existence.

False Teachers and False Teachings

It is central to the understanding of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter that its two parts—the revelation of Jesus concerning the false teachers of the church and the vision of Peter revealing the false understandings of Christ's material nature—are linked thematically by ideas of knowledge and ignorance. The church leaders who are misled and who mislead others are like those who crucify Jesus, thinking that they know the truth when in fact they are misled by appearances. The ultimate reality is not material but spiritual. The church leaders are blind and ignorant, people of the flesh instead of the spirit, devoted to the creator Elohim and so enslaved to the Law, rather than perceiving the true divine being who is the radiant savior.

These church leaders not only fail to understand the true God, thinking that he is Elohim, and Christ, thinking that he is a dead man: they also misunderstand Peter, who is the foundation for the "remnant" that has knowledge. Peter sees that Christ is not the "dead man" who was crucified, but the living, laughing savior who is an incorporeal body (83.7) and who was "released" from his flesh (82.30). Just as God and Christ are falsely proclaimed by the proto-orthodox community, so too Peter is falsely claimed in support of the community's errant theological and Christological views. The forgery of the book functions, then, not only to correct the proto-orthodox community in its doctrinal assertions but also to rob it of its apostolic foundation. The person claimed by the proto-orthodox as the guarantor of the truth of its message shows that this message is rooted in ignorance, blindness, and error.

Part of this error is the claim that truth was anticipated in the Scriptures given by the God of the Old Testament. In fact, prior to the coming of Christ "they did not find him, nor was he mentioned among any generation of the prophet. He has now appeared among these, in him who appeared, who is the Son of Man" (71.6–12). It is not the scriptures of Elohim that reveal Christ, as the proto-orthodox insist. Only Christ himself reveals the truth of God. And it has nothing to do with the material world of the creator.

This pseudonymous attack on materiality, on the significance of Jesus' real bodily death, and on the world of the flesh comes to us as a minority voice among the extant Christian writings of antiquity. As we will see, the proto-orthodox position is, as one would expect, far better represented in our surviving remains. The one-time vitality of this Gnostic view should not be underplayed, however. The orthodox response was so virulent and extensive precisely because of the attractiveness and widespread effect that

the opposition to the flesh had in the early Christian movement. Some of the proto-orthodox response came likewise in forgeries, some of them penned in the name of Peter, including at least one other apocalypse that he allegedly wrote.

The Book of Thomas the Contender

The Book of Thomas the Contender comes to us as tractate 7 of codex 2 from Nag Hammadi. It is generally recognized as a late-second- or early-third-century work, whose major theme, in the words of John Turner, is "unbending asceticism that condemns anything to do with the flesh, supplemented by the Platonic-Hermetic-Gnostic theme of salvation by self-knowledge."[6] The book allegedly records the words of Thomas as written by "Matthias," who could be either Matthew the disciple and Gospel writer or Matthias the apostle elected to replace Judas Iscariot after the resurrection. In either case, the work is pseudepigraphic, or, rather, doubly pseudepigraphic, as it purports not only to be written by an apostle but also to record faithfully the words delivered to another (Thomas). Thomas and Matthew are linked in other Thomasine writings (cf. Gospel of Thomas, 13) and other Gnostic works, such as the Pistis Sophia, where Mariam exclaims that Jesus secretly taught his revelation to Philip, Thomas, and Matthew (1.43).

The book comprises two parts, a lengthy dialogue between Jesus and his twin brother Judas Thomas, and a monologue delivered by Jesus (the final two-fifths of the text).[7] The discussion is placed just before Jesus' ascension (138.23). In a way reminiscent of the Gospel of Thomas, it begins with "the secret words that the savior spoke to Judas Thomas" (138.1–2).[8] In this case, however, it is clear that Thomas is to be understood specifically as the brother of Jesus, as Jesus addresses "brother Thomas" (138.4) and indicates that "it has been said that you are my twin and true companion" (138.7–8). There is obviously no one better to receive the Savior's ultimate teachings about this world and the humans in it.[9]

The revelation is almost entirely about gnosis, self-knowledge:

> I will reveal to you the things you have pondered in your mind … examine yourself and learn who you are, in what way you exist,

> and how you will come to be. … It is not fitting that you be ignorant of yourself. … For he who has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved knowledge about the depth of the all. (138.6–18)

Whether or not one ultimately considers the book "Gnostic," there are certainly Gnostic terms and concepts in it: "depth of the All" (138.18), the Pleroma (138.34), the doctrine for the perfect (139.10), "you will find rest" (145.11); the Archon in charge of this world who will punish those attached to it (142.26–143.7). But ultimately there is no Gnostic mythology either explicated or underlying the views of the text. Instead, it presents a view of rigorous asceticism grounded in Platonic understandings of image versus reality, and a concordant denigration of the flesh. The book may well have been amenable to a Gnostic construal, and could conceivably have been produced, in its current state, by a Gnostic author, but its concerns are not distinctively Gnostic.

Of greater importance for my purposes here is the centrality of the "flesh" to the text. This can be seen at the outset, when Thomas asks to be told about the things that are invisible, leading Jesus to deliberate on the physical, visible (human) body that will decay, controlled by the blaze of lust and destined to perish and be lost (138.10–139.12, 33–37). This then is the point of the entire treatise; it is an attack on the flesh and on those who cave in to its fiery desires. And so human bodies are said to be "bestial" (139.6). Jesus teaches that the body survives by eating other creatures and so changes; but anything that changes "will decay and perish, and has no hope of life from then on" (139.4–6). Moreover, bodies come into being through intercourse, just as happens with "beasts"; as a result humans cannot beget anything that is nonbestial (139.8–11). The goal of existence is for the "elect" to "abandon bestiality," that is, escape their fleshly bodies (139.28–31). For in fact, "the vessel of their flesh will dissolve." And so Jesus pronounces a "woe" on those "who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish" (143.10–11).

One problem with those who live in and for the flesh is that they "suppose that the imperishable will perish too" (143.12–13); that is, they think that this life in the flesh is all there is, and that nothing survives the death of the body. And so Jesus pronounces a series of twelve woes on those who give themselves up to the desires of the flesh, who hope in the

flesh, who are in the grip of the burning of lust of their flesh, who engage in sexual intercourse and do not receive the true doctrine (143.9–145.1). These woes are followed by three blessings for those who have "prior knowledge of the stumbling blocks," who are persecuted for their message, but who "will be released from every bondage" (145.1–8). Jesus' final exhortation sums up his urgent message:

> Watch and pray that you not come to be in the flesh, but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this life. … For when you come forth from the sufferings and passions of the body, you will receive rest from the good one, and you will reign with the king. (145.8–14)

As intimated in some of the preceding quotations, a controlling metaphor of the work is the image of "fire." The illuminating power of the "light" of the sun is set in contrast with the "fire" that burns within human bodies and makes them drunk in mind and deranged in soul (139.33–37). This fire is the bodily passions, "The lust that scorches the spirits of men" (140.3–4). Ironically, this fire will "blind them with insatiable lust and burn their souls" (140.25–26). It is an imitative fire, which gives people an "illusion of truth" but in fact leads them to be imprisoned "in a dark sweetness" (140.21–24).

This passage is nothing so much as an exposition of Plato's Allegory of the Cave: the sun, the fire, the people bound by chains who do not recognize the true light because of the effects of the fire, the ultimate contrast of images versus reality, and so on (*Republic*, 514–20). The heavy Platonism of the Book of Thomas is, in fact, evident throughout, as elucidated in particular by Turner: "In the Book of Thomas, the teaching of Jesus has become Platonized, while Plato's teaching on the soul has become Christianized." The "metaphysical axis" of the book is the Platonic opposition between appearance and reality; its hortatory force is the insistence that the soul must be set free from the bodily appetites that constrain it.[10]

In addition, there is a good deal of eschatological incentive in the piece, which Turner argues is also platonically inspired, but which may as well have come from the early Christian tradition. "Only a little while longer"

and that which is visible "will dissolve" (141:14–15). When it does, "shapeless shades …. will forever dwell upon the corpses in pain and corruption of soul" (141.16–18). Moreover, people "will be thrown down to the abyss and be afflicted by the torment of the bitterness of their evil nature" because they "fulfill the lust of their fathers" (141.32–34). Those who do not come to the truth will find that the fire they follow (the lust of their flesh) will be "the fire that will burn them" (142.2). Those who reject the message of Jesus will be turned over to "the ruler above who rules over all the powers as their king" and he will cast them into the abyss and imprison them in "a narrow dark place" (142.28–35). These souls will be scourged with fire and find fire wherever they turn (142.42–143.7). The flesh may be destined for extinction, but the fire of its passions will burn forever.

It is clear that the forger of this text was involved in some kind of community conflict. The "woes" that are leveled against others are directed toward members of the larger community, those who refuse to engage in the ascetic life that Christ demands and instead value the flesh and so indulge in its passions. This polemical context is seen as well in 141.19–143.7, where Thomas wonders what to say to the "blind" people who do not agree with the teaching. The Savior replies that scoffers will devour each other and suffer horribly in the afterlife. And in fact there is little reason to try to convert the outsiders. This document is meant for those inside the ascetic subgroup of the community; those outside are "ignorant fools" and "blind," and so beyond the pale. They place their hope in the flesh, and for that reason they will be punished forever, not raised to eternal glory. It is those who escape the flesh, and the demands of its desires, who will be liberated to enjoy a blessed afterlife.

The authority for these views is ensured by the identity of its authors. These are the words delivered directly by Jesus himself to his twin brother Thomas, faithfully recorded by the apostle Matthias.

The Gospel of Thomas

We have already examined sayings of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas in chapters dealing with eschatology and anti-Judaism. A third and final set of polemics evident in the text involves sayings that denigrate the flesh and the material world it inhabits. Six of the 114 sayings merit investigation.

Saying 29

When Jesus claims that "If the flesh came into being because of the spirit, it is a marvel"[11] he is almost certainly not referring to the "Holy Spirit" but to the spirit that resides within humans, set here in contrast to the human flesh.[12] It is difficult to imagine that flesh arose because of spirit, for example as a place of housing or imprisonment. But the option, that the "spirit came into existence because of the body," is beyond imagining. That would be a "marvel of marvels." Already Johannes Leipoldt recognized that this alternative does not mean that hearers should be struck with awe that such a thing has happened; on the contrary, "marvel of marvels" indicates that this is a hypothetical possibility that the saying rejects.[13] Read in this way, the three parts of the saying cohere and form an original unity, contra Plisch, who contends that part three of the saying—"I marvel at this, how this great wealth has come to dwell in this poverty"—as incongruous must not originally have belonged with the other two.[14] The parts do in fact belong together, and they function to show the denigration of the flesh as inferior to the spirit. "This great wealth" is the spirit; "this poverty" is the flesh—a completely impoverished existence. It is a marvel to the author that the greatness of spirit has made its home in such a pathetic vessel.

And so Valantasis is probably wrong when he claims that the saying's "problematizing of the world does not denigrate it, but makes it a place of wonder."[15] The world is, to be sure, a place where wonder takes place. But this material existence is itself impoverished and the saying maligns it. That is why, in saying 27, Thomas indicates that one must "fast from the world"; and it is why, as we will see, saying 56 insists that in fact this world is a dead "corpse."

Saying 37

We have already considered the meaning of this verse and some of the scholarship devoted to it in Chapter Eight.[16] In part the verse rejects the expectation of the disciples that there is to be a future apocalyptic salvific moment. But in championing an alternative perspective the saying undermines a basic assumption of futuristic eschatology: this material word and the physical bodies that people inhabit are to be transformed in a cataclysmic act of God. For the Gospel of Thomas, salvation does not come

in the body through an act of future redemption; it comes *from* the body as people learn that this fleshly existence is to be superseded, and so escaped, in order to experience the joys of salvation. It is "when you strip naked without being ashamed and take your clothes, place them under your feet like little children, and stamp on them" that salvation occurs. Here clothes are emblematic of the physical, material body inhabited by the spirit. It is only by discarding it and trampling on the physical shell of one's existence that the spirit can be set free, and so "will see the Son of the Living One, and … not be afraid."

Saying 56

The terse saying 56 arguably summarizes better than any other the Gospel of Thomas's understanding of the material world: "The one who has come to know the world has found a corpse; and the one who has found the corpse, the world is not worthy of that person." The world, when truly known, is recognized as a dead entity; those who come to this recognition are superior to the world because they are the ones who have life, as suggested, for example, in saying one.

It is only because DeConick insists on a thoroughly encratitic interpretation of the Gospel that she decides the verse must be textually corrupt, proffering as an emendation "Whoever has come to know the world has mastered the body. The world does not deserve the person who has mastered the body."[17] This, though, is a textual emendation driven by an interpretive principle. If the text is not forced into a procrustean bed of encratic thought, the logion makes perfectly good sense as transmitted. The material world is dead, not alive; those who know this will live and thus are superior to that which is dead. And so as Plisch can summarize, "Whoever comprehends what this world, the material world …, in its essence really entails, recognizes that it is dead," and so "this world recognized as a corpse is worthless for the one who has this comprehension."[18]

The saying thus has a good deal in common with the Gospel of Philip 73.19–23: "This world is a corpse-eater. All the things eaten in it themselves die also. Truth is a life-eater. Therefore no one nourished by [truth] will die."[19] It is also very close to the virtual doublet in Gospel of Thomas 80, which prefers the term ⲥⲱⲙⲁ to ⲡⲧⲱⲙⲁ for "body"/"corpse." The term ⲥⲱⲙⲁ occurs only three times in the Gospel (sayings 29, 80, 87) and

carries negative connotations each time. For that reason Plisch suggests translating it as "dead body" (i.e., corpse). Valantasis argues that in fact saying 80 and 56 represent two different Coptic renditions of the same Greek saying; but that would mean that the saying was literally repeated twice in the Gospel, which seems somewhat unlikely.[20]

Saying 110

Saying 110 is comparable. In this case a person is said to "find" the world, which surely means, in the context of this Gospel, "finds the true meaning of the world." That person will "become wealthy" and then should "renounce the world." This does not mean that the person who acquires true knowledge of this world will thereby amass worldly wealth, although this apparently is not obvious to Plisch, who suggests that literal riches are in view here.[21] On the contrary, a person who discovers what the world really is—a corpse, as we have seen—has acquired great spiritual wealth far in excess to anything the world has to offer. That is why the person is to renounce the world: it cannot provide anything of value, especially in comparison with the great wealth that inheres in the true knowledge that brings life. Knowing the world must lead one to reject it.

Saying 87

Saying 87 provides a forceful statement that any dependence on the physical body leads to a wretched existence—whether it is another body that depends on the body or the soul that does. DeConick proposes an interesting alternative understanding of the verse, arguing that EISHE here does not mean "depend on" but "hang," in the sense of "hang by crucifixion," as the word is used of Jesus' crucifixion in the Coptic version of Matt. 20:19, Mark 15:14, Gal. 5:24, Heb. 6:6, Acts 2:23, and Luke 23:39. If so, then possibly the verse should be translated as "Miserable is the body crucified by a body. Miserable is the soul crucified by these together." As such, the saying means something like "the body suffers because of its own nature, while the soul suffers because it is united with the body." And so, "the point of the logia [87 and 112], in fact, is that *embodiment is a dire situation with suffering resulting for both body and soul*."[22] Parallels, as DeConick points out, can be found in Clement of Alexandria, who speaks

of bodily pleasure and pain as "nailing" the soul to the body (*Strom*. 2.2; cf. the *Book of Thomas the Contender*) and talks of the soul that is constantly undergoing torture through its bodily sensations (*Strom*. 5.14).[23]

Saying 112

A doublet of saying 87 appears in the terser construction of saying 112: "Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul. Woe to the soul that depends on the flesh." The problem here is specifically the "flesh," denigrated as bringing woe, both to itself and to the soul. A comparable woe is pronounced in the *Book of Thomas the Contender* discussed earlier, "Woe to you who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish" (143.10–11). For both authors, flesh and soul cannot be dependent on each other, and neither can be redeemed by the other. The flesh will perish but the soul can live on. Thus a person needs to strive to become, as the Gospel of Thomas puts it, "a solitary one," renouncing the flesh and living as a soul, not dependent in any way on the material trappings of the body (see sayings 16, 49, 75).

FORGERIES THAT CELEBRATE THE FLESH

It should not be surprising to find that forgeries celebrating the flesh—both of Christ and of the believers—far exceed those that denigrate it. The side that wins preserves the texts. It is only through the lucky happenstance of the Nag Hammadi discoveries that we have been graced with the few forgeries discussed above. The winners, on the other hand, preserved one forgery favoring the flesh as part of the canon of the New Testament, two others that were considered canonical by some of the proto-orthodox at certain times and places, and several others that were widely popular in various parts of the proto-orthodox community.

First John

Like the book of Acts, the letter of First John is not normally treated as a forgery. And like Acts, the book is not pseudepigraphic. Its author does not falsely claim to be a (specific) famous person. But he does make a false

authorial claim of another sort to validate and legitimize his account. By my definition that makes the book a forgery.

The Polemic of the Letter

To make sense of the authorial claim, we should first consider the polemical situation that the author addresses.[24] Judging from the author's derogatory comments, it is clear that a group of one-time insiders have split off from the author's (larger?) community, in part because of a harsh difference over Christology. The "secessionists," as Raymond Brown has dubbed them,[25] appear to have embraced a docetic Christology, in many ways comparable to what was known perhaps a decade or so later to Ignatius of Antioch, and later still found among the followers of Marcion and some groups of Gnostics.[26]

The key passage is 2:18–19, which describes a group of "antichrists" who "went out from us." Clearly, these "opponents of Christ" were once members of the community, who have now left. The author wants to insist that even though these persons were once part of the larger group, "they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us." The author calls them "antichrists"—the first recorded use of the term —because in his opinion they have adopted views that oppose Christ, a remarkable claim for a group of persons evidently committed to Christ. One hint concerning their aberrant view comes then in 2:22. These persons deny that "the Christ is Jesus." It is not widely enough recognized among commentators that this denial involves an identification formula that answers the question "who is the Christ"?[27] For this author, but not his opponents, it is the man Jesus. But what does that mean?

It cannot mean that the opponents are Jews who do not confess the messiah-ship of Jesus, since the subgroup started out as part of the Christian community. They must, then, be believers in Jesus who have developed Christological views that the author considers tantamount to a denial of the community's confession that the Christ is actually the man Jesus (cf. John 20:30–31). What those views might have been becomes clearer in a subsequent reference to the "antichrist" in 4:1–3. The true Christological confession for this author is that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh." In contrast, "every spirit that does not confess Jesus" (i.e., "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh") is not from God. This is "the spirit of the antichrist."

What matters for this author is that believers acknowledge that Christ really came "in the flesh." Anyone who denies that view is an antichrist. The secessionists do not subscribe to a separationist view, such as that occasionally associated with Cerinthus, but a pure docetic view, in which Christ was assumed to be a phantasm, not actual flesh and blood.[28] That can explain why the author stresses the physical nature of the Christ even in the prologue, as we will see in a moment, and why he emphasizes, throughout his short letter, that it is precisely Jesus' "blood" that brings expiation for sin (1:7, 2:2, 4:10, 5:6). The real blood of Jesus is needed for real expiation; there was nothing phantasmal about it.

In many respects the secessionists appear to embrace a Christology that comes to prominence some time later among the docetists attacked by Ignatius in his letters to Smyrna and Tralles.[29] These opponents reject the idea that Jesus Christ "truly" came "in the flesh" and was killed and raised (δοκεῖν) instead, they teach that he only "seemed" ἐν σαρκί; to be what he was and to do what he did (thus Ign. Smyrn. 1.1–2, 2.1, 3.1–3, 4.2, 5.2, 7.1; Ign. Tral. 9.1–2). For them Jesus was a spirit without a real body of flesh, who assumed the form of a human for a short while. It is significant that Ignatius stresses, on the contrary, that Jesus' body could be perceived and handled (ψηλαφάω; Ign. Smyrn. 3.2), much as the prologue of 1 John emphasizes that the Word of Life could be heard and handled ((ψηλαφάω).). An especially striking parallel occurs in Ignatius' condemnation of his opponents for "not confessing that he bore flesh" (Ign. Smyrn. 5.2, μὴ ὁμολογῶν αὐτὸνσαρκοφόρον),), which is closely parallel to 1 John 4:2 "every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ having come in the flesh" ((πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα).).

Moreover, just as in 1 John, Ignatius stresses the reality and importance of Jesus' real death in which he shed real blood. The opponents in Smyrna and Tralles are explicitly said to believe that Christ, who was not real flesh, only "appeared to suffer" (λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν αὐτὸν πεπονθέναι, Ign. Smyrn. 2.2; Ign. Trall. 10.1), whereas Ignatius emphasizes that Christ truly ((ἀληθῶς)) suffered, died, and was raised, and that anyone who fails to believe in Jesus' blood is subject to judgment (Ign. Smyrn. 6.1) because Christ's real suffering is what effects salvation (Ign. Smyrn. 1.2, 2.1; cf. 1 John 1:7, 2:2, 5:6).

Thus the polemical emphases of 1 John seem to parallel those found soon thereafter in Ignatius' opposition to the docetic Christians of Smyrna and Tralles. There is no reason to insist that the targets of attack are one and the same, but the two sets of opponents do appear to embrace highly comparable views. Both of them claim that the Christ is not the "man" Jesus, that in fact Christ was not really a flesh-and-blood human. For both the author of 1 John and Ignatius, if Christ was not really in the flesh, he could not really shed blood. And if Christ did not shed his blood, there is no expiation for sin.

The Claims of the Prologue

It is this understanding of the opponents of 1 John that makes best sense of the prologue and its emphasis on the real, tangible appearance of Christ: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have beheld and our hands handled." The author wants to stress, at the very outset of his letter, the Christological theme that will play such a vital role in his harsh polemics. Christ was a physical being who could actually be heard, seen, and handled. He was no phantasm. But who, exactly, is the "we" who have heard, seen, and handled him?

To answer the question, we should first consider how the author uses first-person pronouns throughout the letter. On a number of occasions the first-person plural indicates the entire Christian community, of which the author is one: for example, "we should be called the children of God. … The world does not know us" (3:1–2); "we know that we have passed out of death unto life" (3:14); "they are of the world, we are of God" (4:5–6). In other places the author uses the first-person singular, in all but one instance to indicate that he is the one writing to the larger community: "My little children, I am writing this to you" (2:1); "Beloved I am writing you no new commandment" (2:7); "I am writing to you, little children" (2:12); and so on. In these instances the author differentiates himself ("I") from his readers ("you"). This differentiation also occurs in several instances of the use of the first-person-plural pronoun. In some such instances the author differentiates between his readers and himself, even though they are all part of the larger Christian community: "you have heard that anti-Christ is coming … therefore we know that it is the last hour" (2:18). More

important, in other instances the author differentiates between his readers and a group of persons that the author includes himself among; this latter group is decidedly not the entire Christian community: "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you" (1:5). "We" in this instance cannot be "all Christians" because "you" includes Christians as well. The "we" then is a subgroup among the Christian community.

It is this latter kind of differentiation that is the key to understanding the first-person pronoun of the prologue. It is true, as noted everywhere in the commentaries, that the grammar of 1:1–3 is both confused and confusing.[30] What matters for my purposes here, however, is simply the first-person pronoun itself. In this case the author is not claiming simply to be a member of the entire Christian community who has "heard … seen … and handled" the incarnate word of life. He is a part of a smaller community that has had these tangible experiences involving Christ, and he is relating them to his readers. To begin with, that is evident from the graphic nature of the language—the community may have "seen …. and heard" Christ in a metaphorical sense; but they certainly did not "handle" him. As Brown has observed: "clearly the author is claiming participation in a physical contact with Jesus."[31] Moreover, and yet more compelling, the author makes a clear differentiation here between himself and his readers, between "we" and "you": whereas "we have heard … have seen … have looked upon … and handled with our hands"(v. 1), it is to "you" that the author has proclaimed these things (v. 2). Thus only some believers have been in real, physical contact with Christ, and can attest to his physical existence as one who could be observed, heard, and handled. And the author includes himself among this select group. In other words, the author is claiming to have been among the inner group of Jesus' followers who can bear witness to his real, physical nature.[32]

Except that he cannot be. He is an author living and writing long after the fact.[33] In asserting that he was an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, he is advancing a false authorial claim. This then is a forgery, a book whose author claims to be someone other than who he is.

It is important to note that this way of reading the prologue is "normal." Historically, the author—because of this passage—was taken to be an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. The first explicit quotation of the Johannine epistles comes from Irenaeus, who cites 2 John on two occasions

and 1 John once, evidently thinking they are the same writing, and attributing them to John, the Lord's disciple (*Adv. Haer*. 1.16.3; 3.16.5, 8).[34] About the same time, the Muratorian Canon indicates that John wrote the Gospel and his epistles in which he indicates that he saw, heard, and touched Christ (quoting 1 John 1:1). Tertullian cites 1 John more than forty times and refers to it as the work of John. So firmly entrenched was the idea that John had written the anonymous three epistles that later writers who doubted they were by John the son of Zebedee were constrained to identify the author as a *different* John. As Judith Lieu observes, "there was never any alternative tradition of authorship."[35] The view had lasting power, down to the present, as seen in some of the less critical commentaries, such as that of Plummer, who speaks of the author as "the last survivor of those who had heard and seen the Lord."[36]

When more critical commentators—Brown, Lieu, Schnackenburg, and others—reject the idea that the author is claiming to be an eyewitness to the fleshly reality of Jesus in his public ministry,[37] it is almost always because they are convinced that in fact he was not an eyewitness. The fault of the interpretation derives from a failure to understand the world of ancient forgery. What we have in 1 John is an author who very much wanted his readers to think he was an eyewitness, even though he was not. In this he was following established patterns of forged writing from antiquity, seen already, for example, in the author of 2 Peter who was bound and determined to have his readers know that he really was present at the transfiguration of Jesus, or the author of 2 Timothy, who loaded his letter with verisimilitudes to make himself appear to be Paul, or, in fact, the authors of virtually all the pseudonymous documents we have considered. This author is simply applying the craft of the forger.

First John as a Forgery

The reason behind the false authorial claim of 1 John was keenly recognized by Strecker. Since the author is opposing "the false teachers who … represent a docetic Christology … it is important to assert the 'empirical' reality of the Christ event." And so he begins the letter "with a testimony that the Christ lived on earth as visible, audible, and tangible." It is true, Strecker concedes, that the author does not use a pseudonym. But "he is still writing this document under fictitious circumstances. He

pretends to be an eye- and ear-witness, even though that does not correspond to historical reality." And his motive is clear: "such a fiction is appropriate to underscore the claims of this document and hence the author's intention to put the docetic teaching of the opponents in its place."[38]

It cannot be objected that the author would be known to his readers, on the basis of the evidence of 2 and 3 John, sent by the same author to a community of people who knew his identity. There is nothing to suggest that the letter of 1 John was sent to the same community,[39] or, more precisely, the self-same house church, as the other two letters. Indeed, there is good evidence that it circulated as a separate composition. Otherwise it is hard to explain why 2 and 3 John did not have a wider acceptance as authoritative texts early on. Origen, for example, knows of these two smaller letters but never quotes them, questions whether they are canonical, and observes that they are not everywhere accepted as coming even from the same author.[40] Brown concludes that the three letters were not transmitted as a corpus and that whereas 2 and 3 John were assumed to have been written by the somewhat shadowy "presbyter" John, 1 John was understood to have been written by the apostle himself. They may have originally circulated, then, in different communities.

In many respects, then, 1 John is a forgery comparable to the book of Acts. Both writings are, strictly speaking, anonymous. But both authors make false authorial claims through the use of first-person discourse, used in order to establish themselves as eyewitnesses to that which they testify. Both books, in other words, are what I have already termed "non-pseudepigraphic forgeries." In the case of Acts the author claims to be an eyewitness to the life and teachings of Paul; in the case of 1 John the author claims to be an eyewitness to the incarnation of Christ. The latter claim is made for purely polemical reasons.[41] It is directed against onetime members of the community who have created a schism and gone off to form their own community (assuming that it is they, and not the author's own group, who have left), due in large part to a variant understanding of Christology. The author buttresses the beliefs of his own (sub)community, that Christ was a real flesh-and-blood human, by writing an anonymous tractate, choosing anonymity not because his readers know full well who he is but precisely so that he can claim to be someone other than who he is. By

assuming the guise of an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, he can provide the necessary authorization for the Christological views that he feels compelled to advance. Against those who claimed that Jesus did not "come in the flesh," this author attests that he himself heard, saw, and handled Jesus, the "Word of Life" who "was made manifest" (1:1–2). As was the case with so many others, the author's false claims about himself were readily believed, and the book was eventually accepted as a part of sacred Scripture, written by Jesus' own disciple, John the son of Zebedee.

Third Corinthians

Within the short compass of the two letters known, together, as 3 Corinthians we find an entire range of vital issues related to early Christian debates over the status of the flesh: Is the flesh important in the divine scheme? Did Jesus have real flesh? Was he raised in the flesh? Will believers too be raised in the flesh? This final question is related to the issue addressed in 2 Timothy; here, however, the question is not simply about the fact of the future resurrection but also about its character.

The Textual Tradition of the Letters

The scholarly discussion of 3 Corinthians began with J. Ussher's mention of a lacunose Armenian manuscript in 1644.[42] The correspondence was not published however, for another seventy years, making its first appearance in a work by F. Masson.[43] The first critical editions were of the Armenian.[44] The book came into English through a translation by William Whiston,[45] later superseded by a rendition of none other than Lord Byron.[46] It came into German through a translation of W. F. Rink.[47] In most of the surviving Armenian manuscripts, the correspondence occurs as part of the New Testament between 2 Corinthians and Galatians.

The Syriac tradition is known through Ephrem's four-volume biblical commentary (which survives in Armenian translation), which D. Bundy argues is itself pseudepigraphic (falsely ascribed rather than forged).[48] Latin manuscripts began to appear at the end of the nineteenth century; we now have six.[49] The Coptic version, found in the Heidelberg Papyrus, was discovered by Carl Schmidt in 1904 and published in 1905.[50] Finally, and

most important, the sole Greek witness, which, dating from the third century, is by far the earliest manuscript evidence, was found among the Bodmer papyri and published as Bodmer Papyrus X by Michel Testuz in 1959.[51]

Whereas earlier scholars such as Harnack believed that 3 Corinthians was originally part of the Acts of Paul,[52] today it is generally ascribed an independent origin and circulation. For one thing, only the Heidelberg papyrus presents it as part of the Acts; the other manuscripts present it as part of the New Testament. Moreover, among the manuscripts of the Acts of Paul only the Heidelberg manuscript contains the correspondence. Still more important, there are clear anomalies between the narrative of the Acts and the letters. According to the correspondence, heresies present a grave threat to the Christians in Corinth; but in the narrative, once Paul arrives in the city there is no word about heresy. On the contrary, Paul is pleased with the progress of the Corinthian believers. Relatedly, during Paul's visit he makes no mention of an earlier correspondence and mentions none of the problems addressed in it. What is more, whereas Cleobius is presented as an arch-heretic in the Corinthians' letter to Paul, in the narrative he is portrayed as a spirit-filled Christian. And so, it appears that the correspondence originated independently of the Acts of Paul, as recognized not long after the publication of the Bodmer papyrus, for example, by Klijn.[53]

Technically speaking the correspondence consists of four parts: a narrative introduction to the Corinthians' letter to Paul, the letter itself, a narrative introducing Paul's reply, and that letter itself. As S. Johnston has conveniently summarized, different surviving witnesses attest each of these four parts. Our oldest and only Greek witness, the third-century Bodmer Papyrus, attests only the two letters themselves, without narrative introduction. On these grounds it is generally thought today that the sequence of composition and redaction was as follows: the letters themselves were first composed and circulated, narrative introductions to each were later added, and the whole was subsequently inserted into the Acts of Paul.[54] Luttikhuizen, in opposition to Testuz, has made a strong case that the Armenian and Syriac versions drew the correspondence from the Acts of Paul—rather than from an independent manuscript transmission—since they contain the second introductory narrative.[55]

The Themes of the Correspondence

As they stand now, the letters place a particular stress on the importance of the flesh: the fleshly existence of Christ, the fleshly nature of his resurrection, and the fleshly character of the resurrection of believers yet to come. In the first letter, allegedly written to Paul by Stephanus, Daphnus, Eubulus, Theophilus, and Zeno, we learn that two false teachers, Simon and Cleobius, have arrived in Corinth and proclaimed "pernicious words" that have destroyed "the faith of some."[56] In particular they have declared that

> one must not appeal to the prophets and that God is not almighty, there is no resurrection of the body, man has not been made by God, Christ has neither come in the flesh, nor was he born of Mary, and the world is not the work of God but of angels. (vv. 10–15)

Paul's response is more or less a point-by-point refutation, given at much greater length than the succinct summary of the false teachings themselves. As Paul has learned "from the apostles before me who were always with Jesus Christ," Christ was certainly "born of Mary … that he might come into this world and save all flesh by his own flesh and that he might raise us in the flesh" (vv. 5–6).[57] God is called both the "almighty" and the "maker of heaven and earth," and is said to have "sent the prophets first to the Jews" (v. 9). Salvation "of the flesh" comes through the (real) body of Christ (v. 16). Those who "assert that heaven and earth and all that is in them are not a work of God" are "not children of righteousness but of wrath" (v. 19). Moreover, "those who say that there is no resurrection of the flesh shall have no resurrection" (v. 24). Paul concludes his polemic by giving three arguments for the real, physical resurrection of the flesh: the sowing of seeds, the story of Jonah, and an apocryphal account of a corpse that was revived when thrown on the bones of Elisha (vv. 26–32). Those who accept this message, as "received by the blessed prophets and the holy gospel," will be rewarded; those who have rejected it will be punished with fire, "since they are Godless men, a generation of vipers" (vv. 34–37).

Third Corinthians as a Forgery

No one thinks that either letter is authentic.[58] There are, however, a substantial number of Pauline themes and verisimilitudes. Connections with 1 and 2 Corinthians in particular abound: Paul's tribulations (v. 2; cf. 2 Cor. 1:3–10, 11:23–28); the imminent appearance of Christ (v. 3; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51); Paul's claim that he delivered to the Corinthians what he also "received" (v. 4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3); the body as a temple of righteousness (v. 17; cf. 1 Cor. 6:19); an attack on those who say that "there is no resurrection" (v. 24; cf. 1 Cor. 15:12); the resurrection compared to sown seeds (vv. 26–27; cf. 1 Cor. 15:36–37); the coming judgment (v. 37; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10). A large number of other Pauline words and phrases are scattered throughout: "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v. 1; cf. Phil. 1:7, Phlm. 1); "seed of David" (v. 5; cf. Rom. 1:3); believers' "adoption" (v. 8; cf. Rom. 8:15–17); "children … of wrath" (v. 19; cf. Eph. 2:3); the "marks" that Paul bears (v. 33; cf. Gal. 6:17); "that I may win Christ" (v. 34; cf. Phil. 3:8–9); "that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead" (v. 33; cf. Phil. 3:11); and many others. Clearly the author knows Paul's letters and imitates their phrasing. In this case we are not dealing with a forger who is simply claiming to be an apostle and providing little "evidence" to support his claim (as, say, with the letters of 1 Peter or Jude). This author wants to sound like Paul.[59] Even so, as we will see in a moment, he fails miserably on several fronts.

The function of the forgery is to use the apostolic name to oppose heretical groups who denigrate the flesh and the fleshly resurrection. Over the years scholars have failed to resist the vain temptation to nail down the identity of the opponents with greater precision. And so, for example, Rist argued that the opponents were Marcionites of an Apelles sort: "the best organized and the most aggressive 'heresy' during the latter part of the second century."[60] W. Rordorf proposed that the opponent was Saturninus;[61] M. Muretow held that it was Simon Magus;[62] Hovhanessian suggested the Ophites.[63] Most commonly, however, it is recognized that there is not a specific group of "heretics" in view, but a kind of teaching, found in various guises among the Marcionites and sundry Gnostics. This is the conclusion of Klijn: "we are not able to say that the correspondence was written against one particular kind of heresy. The correspondence probably describes a tendency in the early church."[64] And Luttikhuizen: "we may be dealing with a *general* warning against the invasion of Gnostic ways of thinking into Christianity rather than with the refutation of a specific group

of Gnostics."[65] Or Johnston: the letter is an attack on "all the gnostic ideas that circulated during his era."[66]

At the same time, given the popularity of Paul among both Marcionites and sundry Gnostic teachers, it is worth entertaining the idea that the author believed himself to be countering teachings that claimed support in Paul's own proclamation. We have seen such a contest over Paul in 2 Peter, whose pseudonymous author objected to the "ignorant and unstable" false teachers who "twist" Paul's letters "to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). Already in Paul's own day we know of groups of his own devotees who, in his opinion, seriously misconstrued his message. This at least is true of one of the groups in Corinth who claimed to be "of Paul," in opposition to others who claimed to be "of Cephas," "of Apollo," or "of Christ." Possibly the most striking feature of the historical Paul's intervention in this Corinthian dispute is that he does not side with his own party, but attacks them along with all the others for misunderstanding the true meaning of the gospel, even though this was a group that specifically appealed to his authority for their views.

Many of the themes of 1 Corinthians—especially, but not exclusively, those involving splits in the community—are replicated a generation later in the letter of 1 Clement, also written to Corinth, the church, remarkably, said to be the recipient of the apocryphal correspondence we are now considering. Like 3 Corinthians, 1 Clement is deeply concerned about the teaching of the future resurrection, and is invested in arguing for its reality in the face of those who denied it (esp. 1 Clem. 24–26). Both letters appeal to nature in support of their views: the claim, "if one will not take the parable of seeds. … " (3 Cor. 26), is not formally far removed from "he shows us the magnificence of his promise even through a bird" (1 Clem. 26.1). In fact, there is good reason for thinking that 3 Cor. 26 ("For they do not know, O Corinthians, about the sowing of wheat") is an allusion to 1 Clement 24:4–5 ("We should consider the crops: how, and in what way, does the sowing occur?"). Both passages are based on Mark 4:26–27; and there are several striking verbal parallels: βάλλω, τῶν σπερμάτων (Mark has σπόρον instead), εἰς τὴν γήν (Mark has ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), and γυμνή (not in Mark).[67] Still, even though there is a literary connection between these two writings, it would be difficult to show, historically, that Clement's opponents were the same as 3 Corinthians docetists.[68]

What is clear is that Paul could be, and was, appealed to by various sides in debates over both the resurrection and the related issue of the status of the flesh. It is no accident that the Marcionites—harsh opponents of the flesh—appealed to forged letters of Paul to the Alexandrians and Laodiceans (according to the Muratorian Canon). 3 Corinthians can well be seen, then, as a kind of counterforgery to the views of certain Paulinists (Marcion and some Gnostics), and possibly to actual forgeries that they produced. It also counters the views found in certain docetic fabrications, such as the Acts of John and its remarkable portrayal of a phantasmal Christ (e.g., Acts of John 93),[69] as well as (possibly) Gnostic works not connected with Paul, such as the *Book of Thomas the Contender* considered earlier. And when "Paul" claims in the letter that "I delivered to you first of all what I received from the apostles before me who were always with Jesus Christ" (v. 4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3), the forger provides an even more precise counterforgery to claims such as those found in the forged Epistula Petri and the book it introduces, the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, where Paul stands precisely at odds with the views of Peter, the one who was with Christ for his public ministry and knew Christ far better than did Paul, who acquired his "knowledge" from a brief and unreliable vision. Here then, in 3 Corinthians, we have a "Paul" who appears to be fighting against other "Pauls."

What is most striking of all is that this particular "Paul" stands at odds with what we know about the real, historical Paul, at least as he is represented in the undisputed Pauline epistles. This has been shown above all by Benjamin White in his recent analysis of 3 Corinthians.[70] For one thing, the forged letter—in dealing with the question of Christ's nature—places almost no importance on the death of Jesus, and overlooks questions about the Jewish Law, focusing instead on the role of the Spirit in the teachings of the prophets. Of greater importance, the pseudonymous author embraces views found nowhere in Paul, such as the incarnation of Christ through Mary and the remarkable "proofs" of the resurrection through the stories of Jonah and the bones of Elisha. Most significant, however, is that the author presents views that stand precisely at odds with Paul. In particular, the author has taken Paul's teaching of the resurrection of the "body" (σῶμα) and transformed it into a doctrine of the resurrection of the "flesh" (σάρξ). As White has shown, the stress on "flesh" is not simply different from Paul, it is counter to Paul, who insisted that "flesh and blood

cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). For Paul, the flesh is the fallen part of humans that cannot and will not be redeemed. It is the body that is to be raised, not the σάρξ. As a result, 3 Corinthians represents a forged attempt to salvage Paul that does so only by altering a critical aspect of his actual message.

At the same time, the author was standing in a clearly demarcated line of Pauline tradition, as White has further shown. In particular, his views coalesce strikingly with the views of Paul found in the Pastoral epistles and in the somewhat later writings of Irenaeus. Here then we find the irony we have run across before. Paul is used to combat Paul; but it is a "twisted" Paul—to use the language of 2 Peter—that has been created in order to counter an otherwise "twisted" Paul.

Melchizedek

It may seem highly irregular to include a Gnostic treatise among early Christian texts that champion the flesh and oppose a docetic understanding of Christ, but that is precisely what we have in "Melchizedek," the first treatise of codex 9 discovered at Nag Hammadi. The surviving copy is a highly lacunose revelation to Melchizedek by the angel Gabriel that includes a liturgical rite spoken by Melchizedek. The original text comprised 750 lines. Only 19 of these survive complete, 467 are fragmentary, many of them largely so. The remaining 264 lines, over a third of the entire treatise, are lost altogether.

The pseudepigraphic character of the piece is nonetheless intact. The author claims to be the famous but mysterious royal/priestly figure known from Genesis 14, Psalm 110, and Hebrews 5–7: "And [I immediately] arose —I, Mel[chizedek]—and I began to [glorify] God" (14.15–18);[71] "For I have a name: I am [Melch]izedek, the priest of [God] Most High" (15.7–10); "and they said to me, '[Greetings, Mel]chiz[ed]ek, [Priest] of God [Most High]'" (19.12–14). Whether in this tractate Melchizedek is to be identified as Christ himself, or as distinct from him, has been a matter of dispute.[72]

The book shows strong ties to the Sethian tradition, as seen, for example, in 5.17–19, "I [am Gamal]iel. It is to [snatch away] the assembly of the [children] of Seth that I have come."[73] Among its Gnostic features are a

myth of descent through the realms of the aeons (but cf. *Ascension of Isaiah*) in 1.1–5: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God … from … the aeons, that he might pass through all of the aeons and see in each one of the aeons the nature of the aeon, as to what kind it is, and that he might put on as a garment sonship and goodness…." Moreover, a host of Gnostic divinities are invoked by the piece: Autogenes, Barbelo, Aithops, Doxomedon, Domedon, Harmozel, Oraoiael, Daveithe, Eleleth (5.23ff.); and later Barbelo Doxomedon Harmozel, Oriael, and others (16.17ff.).

In view of the tractate's Gnostic character, what is most peculiar is precisely its anti-docetic Christology, which luckily survives in one of the few intact passages, in a series of polemically contrasting statements:

> Furthermore, they will say of him
> "He was not born," though he was born;
> "he does not eat," though he does eat;
> "he does not drink," though he does drink;
> "he is not circumcised," though he was circumcised;
> "he is without real flesh," though he came in the flesh;
> "he did not suffer death," <though> he did endure suffering;
> "he did not rise from the dead," <though> he did rise from the dead. (5.1–11)

As Birger Pearson has noted, the balanced set of contrasts compare favorably to other Christological statements found throughout the early Christian literature, of varying persuasion. One thinks most immediately of the famous contrasting claims of the Acts of John, which function to emphasize precisely the opposite Christological point (in favor of a docetic interpretation):

> So then I have suffered none of those things which they will say of me. … You hear that I suffered, yet I suffered not; and that I suffered not, yet I did suffer; and that I was pierced, yet I was not lashed; that I was hanged, yet I was not hanged; that blood flowed from me, yet it did not flow; and, in a word, that what they say of me I did not endure, but what they do not say, those things I did suffer. (Acts of John 101)[74]

More stark still are the disaffirmations of the Manichaean Psalms of Heracleides:

> Amen, I was seized; Amen again, I was not seized.
> Amen, I was judged; Amen again, I was not judged.
> Amen, I was crucified; Amen again, I was not crucified.
> Amen, I was pierced; Amen again, I was not pierced.
> Amen, I suffered; Amen again, I did not suffer.… (Ps. Heracl.)[75]

These docetic statements are what one might more naturally expect to find in a Gnostic treatise such as Melchizedek. But instead, the tractate's material similarities are much closer to the paradoxical affirmations of the proto-orthodox Ignatius: "For there is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual, born and unborn, God come in the flesh, true life in death, from both Mary and God, first subject to suffering and then beyond suffering, Jesus Christ our Lord."[76] At the same time, as Pearson points out, whereas the Ignatian statements are presented as paradoxes, those in Melchizedek are polemical contradictions, in which false Christological views are directly countered.

How does one explain such strong anti-docetic polemic in a Gnostic treatise? Pearson considers the possibility that the tractate is connected to the eponymous group of Melchizedekians referred to by several heresiologists. In particular Epiphanius maintained that the Gnostic Melchizedekians subordinated Christ to Melchizedek and affirmed that Christ originated from Mary, that is, that he was born as a man (*Pan*. 55). Interestingly, a low Christology is also attested for the group in both Hippolytus (*Refut*. 7.24) and Pseudo-Tertullian (*Haer*. 8). For them, Christ was purely human, a "mere man," in contrast to the heavenly power of Melchizedek, of which he was the image. The conclusion to hand is that this group stressed the real, fleshly humanity of Christ and his actual suffering in order to contrast these with their more exalted views of Melchizedek.

On the other hand, given the overwhelming unreliabilities of the heresiological reports—Epiphanius being the most obvious and extreme case—there may be a better explanation for the presence of an anti-docetic Christology in a Gnostic work. Schenke proposes a somewhat more

economical solution. The Gnostic tractate of Melchizedek that we now have was at one point edited and revised along proto-orthodox lines, creating the odd amalgam that we now have:

> The simplest solution[:] the assumption that in Melch the degree of secondary Christianization of Sethian gnosis has reached such force that it exceeded its categorical boundaries and that the Sethianism here lost its gnostic character. That is to say: Melch would represent a Christianized Sethianism that is no longer gnostic at all.[77]

However one evaluates the genesis of this odd tradition, it is clear that here in Melchizedek we have one Nag Hammadi document that simultaneously evinces clear Gnostic tendencies and celebrates the importance of the real fleshly character of Christ and his real tangible suffering.

The Epistula Apostolorum

The Epistula Apostolorum presents us with another emphatic declaration of the importance of the flesh of Christ and the future fleshly resurrection of his followers, in the face of false teachers who proclaim a docetic gospel. The document was unknown until Carl Schmidt discovered a Coptic fragment at the Institut de la mission archéologique française in Cairo in 1895.[78] The complete Ethiopic text, extant in five manuscripts, was published by Louis Guerrier and Sylvain Grébaut in 1912.[79] It is generally thought that the Coptic presents the better form of the text, which was originally composed in Greek, even though it is more fragmentary than the Ethiopic.

A range of dates has been plausibly argued for the work, from around 120 CE to the late second century. In addition to the general tone and theological character of the text, a good deal hinges on how one evaluates the striking claim of chapter 17, presented in variant forms in the Coptic and Ethiopic, concerning the time of the second coming of Christ. According to the Coptic this will occur when the "hundredth part and the twentieth part is completed"—that is, 120 years after Christ. According to the Ethiopic it will be "when the hundred and fiftieth year is completed." The obvious interpretive issues involve the thirty-year difference between

the two accounts and the question of when one is to begin the timetable: at Jesus' birth, for example, or at his death? The temporal discrepancy is most easily explained by the passage of time, with the Ethiopic translation having been created some years after the 120th year had already been completed. As to when the counting should begin, it seems unlikely that the highly anticipated end of all things would be dated from Jesus' birth, as that was not celebrated in the second century, but from his death and resurrection, which was commemorated not only every year at Easter but every single week of the year. If, as seems most plausible, the Coptic preserves the earlier form of the text, then it was in all likelihood produced sometime before 150 CE or so, possibly close to that time.[80]

Manfred Hornschuh provided the pivotal study of the text in 1965.[81] Notwith-standing his many stunning insights, some of Hornschuh's overarching claims appear today rather quaint, if not quite bizarre, especially his contention that the Epistula "cannot be understood either as a document of ancient Christian origins nor as the gnosis of early Catholicism." For Hornschuh, the document is not "early Christian" because it has a divergent understanding of the person and work of Christ (in his view, the Christology is ultimately docetic, even though the polemic is anti-docetic)[82]; it is not "early Catholic" because it assigns no significance to the church and church offices. The book instead reflects a situation in which the author belongs to a minority anti-Gnostic group that has been forced out of the larger (Gnostic) community.

Hornschuh is certainly right in his stress that the book is anti-Gnostic. But there is no reason to see the book as a secessionist document or to deny its essentially proto-orthodox orientation. Apart from the now obsolete construction of "Frühkatholizismus," Hornschuh's view does not consider the wide range of possibilities open to a proto-orthodox author. Not everyone had to obsess over church hierarchy and offices. Moreover, the book goes out of its way to stress important aspects of the emerging regula fidei, as we will see.

The book is presented as a revelatory letter that "Jesus Christ revealed to his disciples" (ch. 1).[83] It does not assume the form of an epistle, however, but of a postresurrection dialogue, known now so well from precisely the kinds of Gnostic texts to which the book sets itself in opposition. Its pseudepigraphic character, in any event, is clear from the outset. It is a letter

describing the experiences of the eleven disciples with the risen Christ after his death and resurrection, written in the first-person plural. The eleven are named and, as has happened before, both Peter and Cephas are said to belong to the apostolic band, as are both Nathaniel and Bartholomew.[84]

The occasion of the letter is the teachings of "the false apostles Simon and Cerinthus." The writer stresses that "in them is deceit with which they kill men." The alternative views of the forger are stated at the outset, as he assures his readers in the names of the true apostles that "we have heard and felt him after he has risen from the dead" and that he "has revealed to us things great, astonishing, real" (ch. 2). The author then launches into a proto-orthodox regula: "Christ is God and Son of God, who was sent from God, the ruler of the entire world, the maker and creator of what is named with every name. …" The bulk of the book provides an account of Jesus' teaching to the eleven after appearing to them in his resurrected body, prior to departing from them in the final chapter. That the teaching is needed because of dangerous heresy is reiterated in Jesus' final words to his disciples: "There will come another teaching and a conflict; and in that they seek their own glory and produce worthless teaching an offence of death will come thereby, and they will teach and turn away from my commandment even those who believe in me and bring them out of eternal life." Both the teachers and those who heed them "will be eternally punished."

That the form of this revelation is closely related to what can be found in Gnostic "secret revelation" resurrection dialogues was recognized early on, by Schmidt himself.[85] Schmidt, however, maintained that the book was not meant to attack Gnostics, but to confirm the "catholics" in their faith.[86] Hornschuh, on the other hand, rightly saw that this is a false dichotomy. The Epistula Apostolorum confirms "catholic" views precisely by contradicting the views of their opponents: "One can scarcely deny that the important parts of the letter are to be understood in no other way than as a refutation of the Gnostics."[87]

Hornschuh notes comparable motifs in such Gnostic works as the Gospel of Mary, the Apocryphon of John, the Sophia of Jesus Christ, and the Pistis Sophia. More could easily be named.[88] The conclusion is near to hand: the author took up the weapon of his enemies in order to fight against them.[89] One major difference, as Hornschuh notes, is that whereas for Gnostics the

revelations made by the resurrected Jesus entailed esoteric knowledge for insiders, for the author of the Epistula Apostolorum they are for broad publication. Here they are given in a letter for universal distribution: "As we have heard it, kept it, and have written it for the whole world" (ch. 1).

Of yet greater moment is the substance of the teaching. And in this book, it is all about substance: the flesh of Christ, the fleshly nature of his resurrection, and the fleshly character of the believers' resurrection yet to come. Even though the incarnation is described in a Gnostic-like account (though see Melchizedek and the Ascension of Isaiah) of the descent of Christ through "the heavens" (ch. 13), in which he passed by "the angels and archangels in their form and as one of them," becoming "like an angel to the angels," when he went "into Mary" he "became flesh" (ch. 14). And this was not an appearance. He was flesh and he remained flesh, as emphasized throughout the account. After his resurrection his disciples "thought it was a ghost" but he demonstrated to them that "I am he who spoke to you concerning my flesh, my death, and my resurrection" (ch. 11). At his insistence the disciples feel him and his wounds; and he tells Andrew "look at my feet and see if they do not touch the ground (Ethiopic: leave a footprint). For it is written in the prophet, 'The foot of a ghost or demon does not join to the ground' (Eth.: "leaves no print on the ground").

This passage provides a stark contrast to the docetic Acts of John, and its famous passage in which the apostle realizes that Jesus did not have a real body and notices to his amazement that the resurrected Jesus leaves no footprint:

> I will tell you another glory, brethren; sometimes when I meant to touch him I encountered a material, solid body; but at other times again when I felt him, his substance was immaterial and incorporeal, and as if it did not exist at all. … And I often wished, as I walked with him, to see if his footprint appeared on the ground —for I saw him raising himself from the earth—and I never saw it. (Acts of John, 93)

Not so with the *Epistula Apostolorum*. After Jesus' resurrection, "we felt him, that he had truly risen in the flesh" (ch. 12). As Jesus later stresses, "I have put on your flesh, in which I was born and died and was buried and rose again" (ch. 19). Moreover, just as Christ rose "in the flesh" so too "you

also will arise" (ch. 21). For indeed: "The flesh of every one will rise with his soul alive, and his spirit" (ch. 24; repeated in chs. 25 and 26). Moreover, those who teach "another teaching" will experience real punishment involving physical pain in the afterlife (ch. 29); those who suffer physical persecution in this world, on the other hand, will receive a heavenly reward (ch. 38).

Clearly in the Epistula Apostolorum we are dealing with a counterforgery on numerous levels. In the weak sense, it is a book that counters widespread and popular views that claimed that Christ did not really and permanently come in the flesh. More specifically, it is countering such notions as found in the book's generic parallels in the Gnostic revelation dialogues. This would include such a writing as the Nag Hammadi letter of Peter to Philip, which also records a (non-pseudepigraphic)[90] postresurrection revelation of Christ. Here, though, Christ is not a fleshly being after his resurrection; he comes to the disciples as a light and a voice. Moreover, even though he appeared to experience his Passion, it was all an appearance: "My brothers, Jesus is a stranger to this suffering" (138.21–22).

But in the strongest sense, the Epistula Apostolorum is countering views found precisely in other forgeries. Numerous striking parallels can be found, for example, with the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, discussed earlier, which contained "secret words" as opposed to those here that are to be published throughout the whole world (138:1); which insisted that salvation comes only when spirits remove themselves from the world of flesh (139.28–30); which taught that the "vessel of the flesh will dissolve and … [be] brought to naught" (141.5–8); which pronounces a woe on "you who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish" (143.10–11); and which ends with the exhortation "Watch and pray that you not come to be in the flesh, but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this life" (145.8–10).

Not so for the Epistula Apostolorum, a proto-orthodox forgery that stresses in the names of the apostles that Christ took on real flesh, remained in the flesh, rose in the flesh, and informed his followers that they too would rise, in the flesh.

The Letter to the Laodiceans

The Letter of "Paul" to the Laodiceans survives in a large number of manuscripts of the Latin Bible from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries.[91] The letter is a pastiche of Pauline phrases with no obvious theme or purpose. Apart from the opening line, drawn from Gal. 1:1, the borrowings are almost entirely from Philippians. About a tenth of the letter represents "filler" provided by the author, which is also without character or color.[92]

Scholars have long vied with one another to see who could express the greatest contempt for the letter's sheer banality. Thus Leon Vouaux in 1913: "It is indeed as trivial as possible;[93] Karl Pink in 1925: "The letter is a pitiful concoction without any kind of personal note on behalf of the author, without a trace of heresy, without bias or purpose";[94] Adolf Harnack in 1931: "It is with regard to content and form the most worthless document that has come down to us from Christian antiquity";[95] and most recently Régis Burnet, who moves the lament to the title of an article: "Pourquoi avoir écrit l'insipide épître aux Laodicéens?"[96] The letter nonetheless serves an interesting historical function, as I will argue below: it appears to be a forgery meant to provide an indirect counter to those who would deny the value of the flesh.

The early references to the letter are confused and confusing. The Muratorian Fragment speaks of Marcionite forgeries of "Pauline" letters to the Alexandrians and the Laodiceans. The former no longer survives in any form; with respect to the latter, it is impossible to determine if the unknown author of the canon has our extant letter in view. If so, it is difficult to know why he would have considered it Marcionite, had he actually managed to read it.[97] Tertullian, soon thereafter, also indicates that the Marcionites had a letter to the Laodiceans, but claims that this was none other than an edited and renamed version of Ephesians (i.e., not a separate production; *Adv. Marc*. 5. 11, 17). Epiphanius complicates matters when he argues that Laodiceans was a separate, fifteenth Pauline letter; but when he quotes from it, he cites Eph. 4:5 (*Panarion*, 42.9.12).

With just these earliest references to a Laodicean letter, then, we are left with a host of puzzles. In the early centuries was there just one letter to the Laodiceans (the one we now have) which was sometimes mistakenly identified as an edition of Ephesians by people who had not actually seen it? Or were there two (e.g., ours and one forged by Marcionites)? Or three (ours, the Marcionites', and an edited form of Ephesians)? And just with

respect to our earliest reference: Did the author of the Muratorian Fragment have our letter in mind but not realize that it was not, in fact, Marcionite? Did he have another letter in mind, and not know about our letter? Or did he have our letter and think (as later Harnack would argue) that it was a Marcionite production?

After Epiphanius, references to the letter proliferate.[98] It is only with the Pseudo-Augustinian *Speculum* of the fifth-sixth centuries, however, that we have an actual quotation of our Laodiceans. Moreover, the author of this falsely attributed work sees the letter as canonical. This is also about the time of our earliest manuscript evidence for its existence, in the codex Fuldensis, produced by Victor of Capua in 546 CE. The letter is now found in the better manuscripts of the Vulgate[99]; it came to be widely respected in the West despite the condemnation of Jerome (*Vir. ill*. 5) and others. It was reproduced in German Bibles prior to Luther, for example, and in Czech Bibles until the seventeenth century, where it was placed between Colossians and 1 Thessalonians.[100] But it was rejected unanimously in the Greek-speaking East, most notably at the Second Council of Nicea in 787 CE.[101]

There have been long debates over the original language of the letter, with Westcott arguing that it was written in Latin and his colleague J. B. Lightfoot, who provided the first full collations, arguing for Greek.[102] Harnack opted for a totalizing view, suggesting that it was originally produced in both a Latin form (known to the Muratorian Fragment) and in Greek. That, however, is more a council of despair than a conclusion, and in any event, even with a bilingual edition, one of the two would necessarily have to have been written first.[103] As to when the letter was produced, in theory it could have been any time before our first hard evidence for its existence—the *Speculum*—though most scholars date it much earlier, to the end of the second century, a date that makes good sense in view of its possible occasion and purpose, as will be seen.

This matter of occasion and purpose has long vexed scholars. The most common explanation is also the most obvious one, that the letter was produced by someone intent on filling the lacuna occasioned by the reference in Col. 4:16: "When this letter is read by you, see also that it is read in Laodicea and that you as well read the one from Laodicea."[104] If Paul mentions a letter sent to the Laodiceans, there must once have been

one, and some unknown forger set out to create it. Burnet objects that the letter could not have been generated on these grounds, since Colossians speaks of a letter ἐκ Λαοδικαίας rather than a letter πρὸς Λαοδικαίαν. And it is true that as early as Chrysostom it was sometimes thought that the reference in Col. 4:16 was not to a letter Paul had written but a letter Paul had received.[105] But there is no reason to push the language so hard. The Colossians passage is frequently read even today as referring to a letter sent by Paul to the Laodiceans, which the Colossian church would get, therefore "from" them, and there is no reason that a forger might not have construed the passage in this way as well. It scarcely need be stressed that since Colossians itself is forged, there is no way of knowing whether the reference to a Laodicean letter indicates real knowledge of some such writing or represents, instead, a simple verisimilitude of the earlier forger.

Even without pressing the logic of the preposition used in Col. 4:16, one might still question if its reference to a now-lost letter can explain the banal concatenation of Pauline phrases that have come down to us as the letter to the Laodiceans. Why would anyone feel compelled to produce such a letter, simply because one was once "known" to exist? Surely something drove the forgery outside of idle curiosity or the desire to supply what was lost. Was it, really, just a random writing exercise? Why then would it have been put into such wide circulation? And how might the author's motivation relate to the character of the letter he produced, which, had he signed his real name to it, would have opened him up to the charge of plagiarism?

The most radical view came in the later writings of Adolf Harnack, who changed his tune toward the end of his career and decided that in fact our surviving letter is the Marcionite forgery denounced by the Muratorian Fragment.[106] The letter, in Harnack's judgment, was forged not by Marcion, but by one of his followers. The forger kept his work, with its Marcionite tendencies, very subtle so as to escape detection and enable broad distribution. And his ploy obviously worked. No one except the anonymous author of the Muratorian Fragment recognized the writing for what it was. Until Harnack.

Harnack argues that, despite all previous scholarship, the Marcionite character of the writing can be shown irrefutably (unwiderleglich). His most important points are the following:

Marcion's "Apostolos" began with the letter to the Galatians, which provided the foundation for all that follows, starting with Gal. 1:1. And that is the verse with which the letter to the Laodiceans begins.

Philippians begins with the words "I give thanks to my God." Laodiceans echoes the thanksgiving with a key change that reveals the author's modalistic (i.e., Marcionite) Christology: "I give thanks to Christ" (v. 3).

On two occasions in vv. 4–5 the author warns against the vapid preaching of false teachers, which stands over against the "veritas evangelii." This phrase, "the truth of the Gospel" is a Marcionite terminus technicus. Moreover, by stressing that this true gospel is "preached by me," the author sets his (Paul's) proclamation over that of other evangelists or apostles—a key Marcionite emphasis.

Marcion denied the promise of knowledge of "eternal life" to those who adhered to the Old Testament and, especially, to the catholic Christians. "Eternal life" became a catchword of his proclamation and for his church. And strikingly the phrase "eternal life" shows up twice, unexpectedly, in this letter in vv. 5 and 10 (cf. v. 7).

Harnack concludes: "These observations are decisive: our letter is a Marcionite forgery."[107] As indicated, however, for him the letter did not derive from Marcion himself. For one thing, Marcion renamed Ephesians Laodiceans, and so had no reason to create a separate letter to the Laodiceans. What is more, the letter was not produced as Marcion produced his other "biblical" writings, which was through editing, not creating/compiling. And so one of Marcion's followers produced it after his lifetime but before the Muratorian Canon, 160–190 CE. This unknown author wanted to fill the gap left by Col. 4:16 and did so by bringing the clandestine Marcionite teachings (die heimlich Marcionitischen Lehren) to expression in a way that catholic Christians would not be able to detect. And so he worked with Pauline phrases, principally from Philippians, because it was relatively easy, using this epistle, to make the composition appear harmless. Fearing to show his hand, he did not include any explicitly Marcionite teachings in the letter.

If anyone could make a case for the banal letter of the Laodiceans being a Marcionite forgery, it would have been the mighty Harnack. But he won virtually no converts to his view. Each of his points individually appears

weak: (1) if the author wanted to stress Galatians at the outset, why would he not quote it more extensively throughout, and use at least one phrase that actually mattered for the Marcionite cause? (2) the exchange of God and Christ was exceedingly common in early scribal and homiletical contexts, and never required a Marcionite modalism for explanatory force; (3) false teachers are a problem for every Christian group, not just the Marcionites; (4) so too eternal life was a ubiquitous concern. More than that, there simply is no Marcionite theology in the letter. To claim that the author worked subtly would be an understatement: even heresiologists known for their ability to sniff out heresy where none existed did not detect a whiff of Marcionism in the letter. The letter would certainly not have been accepted in the West had there been the least thing to suspect in it; moreover, there would be no reason for the author of the Muratorian Canon to oppose the Marcionite "Laodiceans" if in fact this pastiche of Pauline phrases were it. There must, then, be a different explanation.

The most recent attempt at solving the problem is by R. Burnet, who tries to use the set of commonplaces that constitute the letter to advantage, in arguing that the letter has no point except to exist precisely as a letter of Paul.[108] Unlike Paul himself, who used his letters as a substitute for his oral message when personally present, this letter has no message: it simply is "Paul" making himself present. Moreover, since the letter talks of eternal life—and thus eternity—this letter is not from the historical Paul but from the Paul living in eternity. It is Paul writing from heaven. The purpose of the letter is not to convey a message but to convey an apostolic presence from the world beyond.

Burnet's hypothesis, which, he admits with a bit of understatement, is "sans avoir de preuve" (p. 140), is that the Christians in Laodicea were jealous of the fact that Paul had written a letter to the Colossians, and so created a letter of their own, so that they too could claim to have an apostolic presence in their midst. The letter was important for them for its status as an object; not for the message it conveys (since it conveys none).

Unlike Harnack, Burnet does not attempt to offer any argument for his hypothesis, which must, as a result, remain as unprovable as any baseless hypothesis. It should be noted, however, that there is no evidence that the letter was actually produced in, read in, cherished in, or preserved in Laodicea. Nothing connects it with Laodicea other than its address. Any

real association with the Christians there—about whom we know next to nothing—is necessarily imaginary.

A more compelling option was suggested by Wolfgang Speyer, although he did not explicate it in any detail. This is a view that turns Harnack's suggestion precisely on its head: our letter to the Laodiceans is not the Marcionite forgery mentioned by the Muratorian Fragment, but a proto-orthodox counterforgery, produced precisely to oppose the (now-lost, if it ever existed) Marcionite version.[109]

If hard-pressed one could dig as deep into the well as did Harnack to find characteristics of the letter that could be taken in anti-Marcionite ways. The author, claiming to be Paul, tells his reasons to avoid false teaching that leads "away from the truth of the gospel" (v. 4). And why? Because of what will happen on the "day of judgment" (v. 3). That day will be survived by those who do the appropriate "good works" (v. 5). The author stresses his own suffering, which will lead to salvation (vv. 6–7). The author is happy to die for the sake of the gospel (v. 8). These are all tactile phenomena. The author stresses the importance of the physical response to the gospel: to do good, to act for God, to suffer, to die—all for God. Salvation does not come from an empty belief in a docetic Christ, but a hard-fought life of love and service.

But not too much can be made of the tactility expressed in the letter. The reason for thinking it is an anti-Marcionite forgery is that it exists. This is comparable to the supposition of Burnet, but in this case there is both an argument and a logic. What we know historically is this. In proto-orthodox circles, as evidenced in the Muratorian Fragment and Epiphanius, for example, it was known—or at least believed—that a Marcionite forgery existed, a letter of Paul to the Laodiceans. This forgery, whether real or imagined, was almost certainly conceived of on the basis of Col. 4:16, and was with equal certainty a forgery that actually (or imaginarily) pressed a Marcionite agenda (which, among other things, opposed the material world, Christ's flesh, and the importance of human flesh). Proto-orthodox writers not only knew of the existence of this forgery; they also, naturally, opposed it. But what would be the best way to show that the Marcionite forgery was not the letter Paul was referring to in Col. 4:16? What better way than to produce the *real* letter of Paul to the Laodiceans? If the real item existed, the Marcionite version would be exposed as a forgery.

And so a proto-orthodox author produced the "real" thing. That is why the letter is both completely banal and totally dependent on other Pauline letters. There was no point to the forgery other than its existence, to show that the Marcionite forgery was a fraud. But it had to sound very much like Paul to be convincing. And who sounds more like Paul than Paul? The forger then simply borrowed a large number of phrases from Galatians and, especially, Philippians, strung them together, gave them a Pauline epistolary frame and format, and thereby accomplished his aim. The letter he produced was "the" Letter to the Laodiceans. To counter the Marcionite forgery it did not have to replicate anti-Marcionite polemic. All it had to do was sound like Paul. The author succeeded spectacularly. The letter circulated as part of the New Testament throughout a large chunk of the Latin Middle Ages.

The Apocalypse of Peter

The Apocalypse of Peter, to be differentiated from the Coptic Apocalypse of the same name, was discovered during the winter excavation season of 1886–87 by a French archeological team, digging in Cemetery A at al-Hawawis in the desert necropolis of Akhmim. It is one of four texts included in the sixty-six page book that included, as well, the Gospel of Peter.[110] Debates over the date of the manuscript have been most satisfactorily resolved by Cavallo and Maehler, who place the hand in the late sixth century.[111] Since the discovery, two small Greek fragments have appeared, shown by M. R. James to derive from a single manuscript. One of these is now in the Bodlean; the other is in the Erzherzog Rainer collection in Vienna.[112]

The Ethiopic version of the apocalypse was uncovered from the manuscript tradition of the Pseudo-Clementines, and published in 1907 and 1910 by E. Grébaut, though not recognized as belonging to the same account as the Greek text until 1911, again by M. R. James.[113] Today it is generally recognized that the Ethiopic version, which was probably derived from Arabic, is the older of the two, and that the surviving Greek text has been seriously edited, possibly in order to make it more closely aligned with the Gospel of Peter in the same codex.[114] The differences between the two versions matter a good deal for interpretation. As van Minnen points out,

the Akhmim fragment edits away all positive "references to things Jewish."[115] Of yet greater significance for our purposes in this chapter, the future punishments of the damned in the Ethiopic account are transformed in the Greek into punishments in the present for those dwelling in heaven and hell.

Date

There have been numerous debates over the date of the writing. As it is cited by Clement of Alexandria (Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.14.1; *Ecl. Proph*. 41.2, 48–49) and named by the Muratorian Fragment, it can clearly date no later than the mid second century.[116] Some scholars have urged greater precision in the dating, notably D. Buchholz and especially R. Bauckham, who base their arguments on the interpretation of the parable of the fig tree in chapter 2.[117] Here Peter asks for an explanation of the parable, and Christ launches into a detailed exposition. The fig tree "is the house of Israel."[118] Once its branches sprout, then "shall deceiving Christs come, and awaken hope (with the words): 'I am the Christ.'" One in particular will arise who "is not the Christ." And when the followers of Jesus reject this one, "he will kill with the sword (dagger) and there shall be many martyrs." These "shall be reckoned among the good and righteous martyrs who have pleased God in their life."

Bauckham argues that this passage refers to the false messiah Bar Kochba and to his slaying of Christians who refused to participate in the second revolt, as mentioned by Justin (see 1 *Apol*. 31). The Apocalypse, then, can be dated to the time of the second revolt, 132–35 CE. Other scholars, however, such as van Minnen, have made convincing counterarguments. Even if ch. 2 refers to the events under Bar Kochba—which is not clear, as the references are far from precise—that would simply mean that the text would date to some period later than 135; Bar Kochba, in that case, may be used by the text as an example of the *kind* of antichrist that will arise.[119] E. Tigchelaar goes even farther: the text at issue is corrupt, most of the terms used of the messianic figure are stock, there is no evidence that Bar Kochba killed "many" Christians, and many of the historical references of the text work as well for the events of 115–17 CE. One payoff is that we cannot use the second revolt as the hermeneutical lens

for reading the account.[120] At most we can say that the document was produced at least by the middle of the second century.

Whenever it was produced, the Apocalypse of Peter proved to be a historically significant book. It was considered to be part of Scripture by Clement of Alexandria[121] and the scribe of codex Claramontanus. It is listed as a disputed book in the Muratorian Fragment and the Stichometry of Nicephorus. Eusebius saw it as spurious (*H.E.* 3.3.2, 3.25.4, 6.14.1), but Sozomen reported that it was used in public worship on Good Friday (*H.E.* 7.19). It is not, however found in the Gelasian Decree.

Narrative

The Apocalypse of Peter is noteworthy as the first surviving account of a guided tour of the realms of the damned (chs. 3–12, Ethiopic) and the blessed (chs. 13–16; the Greek reverses the sequence). The beginning of the narrative sounds very much like the opening of the famous apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13 and its Synoptic parallels: "And when he was seated on the Mount of Olives, his own came unto him, and we entreated and implored him severally and besought him saying unto him, 'Make known unto us what are the signs of thy parousia and of the end of the world.'"

The bulk of the narrative, then, recounts in graphic detail and some voyeuristic glee the fates awaiting souls in the age to come. The account concludes with an alternative version of the transfiguration, in which Peter volunteers to build "three tabernacles," one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah; a voice comes from heaven affirming that Christ is the beloved Son, and then a great cloud comes to take away all three of them.

Bauckham in particular has argued that the narrative is not to be seen as a variation on the apocalyptic discourse of the Synoptics but as a postresurrection narrative.[122] If he were right, the work would present the final words of the resurrected Jesus to his followers and could be seen as a kind of counterforgery to the Gnostic revelation dialogues. In this it would be much like the Epistula Apostolorum, as here—contrary to the Gnostic counterparts—the real physical experiences of the afterlife are quite emphatically in the flesh. But the account, as we will see, is anti-Gnostic wherever one places it in the story of Jesus, and it is very hard indeed to deny that the opening sets the stage for an alternative description of the small apocalypse of Mark 13 and its parallels. Moreover, the conclusion is

not an ascension narrative, as Bauckham is forced to argue, but contains all the elements of the transfiguration scene (Peter's presence; Moses and Elijah; the voice from heaven; the cloud).

In any event, the "tour" (real or imagined) that Christ gives Peter of the respective realms of the dead focuses on the tactile experiences of the afterlife. Most attention has been paid to the horrific punishments meted out to sinners. Five times in the account the author stresses that each one will be treated "according to his deeds" performed while living. Nowhere is the point more emphatic than at the outset, where Christ proclaims:

> Recompense shall be given to each according to his work. As for the elect who have done good, they will come to me and will not see death by devouring fire. But the evil creatures, the sinners and the hypocrites will stand in the depths of the darkness that passes not away, and their punishment is the fire, and angels bring forward their sins and prepare for them a place wherein they shall be punished for ever, each according to his offence. (ch. 6)

What has struck scholars most is that many of the punishments of hell work on the principle of the lex talionis. This is not simply a Jewish notion, as István Czachesz points out by recalling the clever line in Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata*: "Didymon the flute player, on being convicted of adultery, was hanged by his namesake."[123] But as also widely noted, not all of the punishments described in the book are "kind for kind." In the helpful taxonomy of Bauckham, four of the twenty-one torments are specifically body part for body part; and six others could be construed this way. Others, however, replicate common human punishments made eternal (whips, burnings); others reflect what happens typically to exposed human corpses (being eaten by birds); and yet others have traditional associations with the Jewish place of punishment, Gehenna (darkness, fire).[124] In any event, the punishments are individualized for different kinds of sin; they are as a whole meant to vindicate God's justice; they are retributive, not reformatory (too late for all that!); and they are eternal—a fact stressed eleven times in the older form of the Ethiopic, though edited out in the Greek, possibly because the editor had an alternative understanding of eschatological realities. This final point is worth stressing. In the Ethiopic version the

punishments describe what will be; in the Greek they are what is occurring in the present. One cannot help but suspect that the de-apocalypticized version represents a transformation generated by the failure of the end to materialize, or at least the heightened sense that it probably never would materialize in the way formerly anticipated.

The Polemical Nature of the Text

Even though the Apocalypse of Peter engages in rather obvious attacks on certain immoral activities and the people who engage in them, it does not level its assault on any groups of heretics or false teachers (in contrast, as we will see, to the Apocalypse of Paul)—or of nonbelievers (e.g., Jews, apart from the possible reference to Bar Kochba). The explicit polemic involves sins, primarily of the flesh. Still, that in itself may be significant in view of the theological debates of the early and middle second century. It is striking and well worth noting that what is emphasized here, in the name of Peter, is the physical fate of humans, in the flesh. They experience either brutal torment or eternal ecstasy. The book in other words, may well function polemically in emphasizing precisely a doctrine that, at the time of its composition, was in wide dispute among various Christian groups, not in the manner of, say, 3 Corinthians, which addresses the issue of the flesh head on as a polemical issue, but by emphasizing the importance of flesh through the words of Christ himself, delivered to his disciples, especially Peter. A number of discussions of the book miss this forest for the trees, not realizing that the flesh is one of the book's ultimate concerns.

The stress on the flesh is clear in the opening eschatological discourse, where Christ emphasizes that on the "day of God" there will be "the decision of the judgment of God" when all people will be gathered before the Father, who will command hell to open up and give up everyone in it. Then, most notably "the beasts and the fowls shall he command to give back all flesh that they have devoured, since he desires that men should appear (again); for nothing perishes for God" (ch. 4). This, then, is "the resurrection of the dead on the day of judgment"—a raising of all flesh to face judgment in the flesh.

The fleshly character of suffering is particularly evident in what Czachesz has called the "grotesque body," the all-too physical "combination of the ludicrous and fearful" in the detailed torments of the damned.[125] So

too with the godly ecstasies narrated in chapter 16, experienced in a beautiful garden with sweet fragrances, to satisfy the bodily senses. It might also be noted that, at the end, it is precisely "men in the flesh" who come to welcome Christ into heaven (ch. 17).

The Pseudepigraphical Character

The forger establishes his false identity at the outset, first as one of Jesus' disciples ("we entreated and implored him severally," ch. 1) and then more concretely as the head disciple himself ("I, Peter, answered and said unto him," ch. 2). The authorial pretense is maintained throughout the narrative, although to some extent it is more pronounced in the later Greek version, where the visions of the damned are narrated in the first person rather than the third (e.g., "I saw another place …" Greek ch. 21, and so on). At the end as well, we have, in both versions, first-person narrative, spoken by Peter: "I approached God Jesus Christ and said to him …" (ch. 16).

A key question that is rarely asked and even more rarely answered in scholarship on the text involves precisely the pseudepigraphic claim. Why does the author feign to be Peter, in particular? In his discussion of *Petrine Controversies* Terence Smith raises the question and never answers it.[126] Bauckham suggests that it is because Peter is the principal disciple and important in Matthew, the author's favorite Gospel. But that too does not get us very far.

It may be more useful to consider the stress the author places on the physicality of the afterlife, where rewards and punishments will be in the flesh. Peter, as we have seen, was sometimes associated with an alternative eschatology, in which the flesh was belittled. Docetic understandings of Christ, and thus denigrations of the importance of the flesh generally, can be found in the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, the letter of Peter to Philip, and —as read, at least, by Serapion and his associates, whether or not this was the authorial "intention"—in the Gospel of Peter. This author responds by stressing the opposite perspective and authorizing his view by appeal, again, to Peter himself. The flesh matters, and will continue to matter into the afterlife.

It is interesting to consider the connections between the two Apocalypses of Peter in this regard, one of them devaluing the flesh and the other emphasizing it. It may be pushing the matter too far to claim that one of

them was written in response to the other. They are, after all, dealing with different subject matters. But if nothing else their similarities and differences do highlight the varying interpretations of the flesh attributed to the chief apostle by forgers antagonistic to one another's views. Both the docetic Coptic Apocalypse of Peter and this proto-orthodox version involve revelations of Christ directly to Peter, that is, visionary experiences that Christ mediates; both take place near the end of Jesus' life; both reveal what cannot be perceived by the normal processes of human observation; both are concerned with spiritual blindness; both see the need to differentiate between truth and error; both have ultimate, eschatological implications to their views of the flesh.

The distinctions between the two accounts are yet more revealing.

In the Coptic apocalypse Peter does not understand what he sees and is told that what is perceived by physical sight is not the ultimate reality. In the proto-orthodox apocalypse Peter understands perfectly well what he sees and his vision represents itself as the ultimate reality.

In the Coptic apocalypse ultimate reality transcends the flesh and resides in the realm of the spirit. In the proto-orthodox version ultimate reality is precisely in the flesh.

In the Coptic apocalypse the ultimate goal of salvation is to be removed from the body and its sensations; the end comes when the physical body is transcended. In the proto-orthodox version salvation comes in the body and its sensations, and the end comes when the physical body is rewarded or tormented.

In the Coptic apocalypse the literal teachings of Peter lead to blindness and error. In the proto-orthodox Apocalypse it is the literal teachings of Peter about the literal events of the future that constitute ultimate truth.

In the Coptic apocalypse the orthodox Christians are condemned for clinging to the name of a dead man. In the proto-orthodox version Jesus is a crucified man whose example should be followed and whose martyrs are counted as pleasing to God.

In the Coptic apocalypse Jesus tells Peter to be strong; since Jesus will be with him, none of his enemies will prevail against him. In the proto-orthodox apocalypse Jesus sends Peter to his martyrdom: "Leave and go to the city of the west and drink the wine about which I have told you."[127]

And so, even though the two "revelations" are about two different matters —Christ's crucifixion and the fate of the dead—the books are very much at odds with one another at a number of key points. The Coptic version is explicitly countering a set of views that is endorsed by the proto-orthodox version, whose own polemic is much more subtle but recognizable nonetheless. The flesh matters. In Buchholz's summary, the author "was involved in the debate over the believers' resurrection bodies. He insists on a very physical, future resurrection for believers."[128] This view is presented specifically in a forgery in the name of Peter, chief of the disciples, and counters writings—including some forgeries—that take, or were believed to take, precisely the opposite perspective, also in the name of Peter, including not only the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter but also the Gospel of Peter and the Letter of Peter to Philip.

The Apocalypse of Paul

Far more influential on the history of Christian thought than the Apocalypse of Peter, though clearly dependent on it for many of its traditions, was the Apocalypse of Paul, which was originally composed in Greek but came to be translated into a number of languages: Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Ethiopic.[129] The work as we have it is dated at the outset: "In the consulate of Theodosius Augustus the Younger and of Cynegius, a certain respected man was living in Tarsus…"[130] Commonly this is taken to indicate that the book was composed, in its final form, around 388 CE.[131] But this in fact is merely the terminus ad quem. And so Silverstein has influentially argued for a later date of around 420 CE and Piovanelli for a slightly earlier one of 395–416 CE.[132] Most recently Hilhorst agrees with an early-fifth-century date for the existing text, but, along with others, stresses that an earlier iteration of the account, lacking the prologue, appears to be attested at least 150 years earlier, as some form of the account was probably known to Origen. Origen quotes the text in a fragment preserved by the thirteenth-century Syrian author Bar Hebraeus (*Nomocanon* VII, 9); moreover Origen's Homily 5 on Psalm 36 describes the fate of souls that appears to parallel the Apocalypse of Paul 13ff. Hilhorst's conclusion is that "some version of the *Apocalypse of Paul* must have existed in the first half of the early third century."[133]

Despite its widespread popularity—down at least to Dante—the work was roundly condemned in orthodox circles, including in the Gelasian Decree. Augustine had nothing good to say about it:

> And from this circumstance, with a most foolish presumption, certain vain persons have devised an *Apocalypse of Paul*, which the sound Church does not accept, full of some fables or other, asserting that this it is about which he had said that he had been caught up to the third heaven and there had heard "unspeakable words, which it is not granted to man to utter." In any event, their audacity would be intolerable if they had said that he had heard [words] which it is not *yet* granted to man to utter; but since he said "which it is not granted to man to utter," who are those people who dare to utter these [words] impudently and unsuccessfully?[134]

Nor did Sozomen:

> So the work entitled The Apocalypse of the Apostle Paul, though unrecognized by the ancients, is still esteemed by most of the monks. Some persons affirm that the book was found during this reign, by Divine revelation, in a marble box, buried beneath the soil in the house of Paul at Tarsus in Cilicia. I have been informed that this report is false by Cilix, a presbyter of the church in Tarsus, a man of very advanced age, as is indicated by his gray hairs, who says that no such occurrence is known among them, and wonders if the heretics did not invent the story.[135]

Arguably the most famous feature of the book is the opening discovery narrative that Sozomen refers to, and which I have already discussed.[136] The account itself begins with a lamentation on the sinfulness of humans by the sun, moon, stars, and sea (chs. 3–10). Paul is then taken up to the third heaven where he is shown the fate of souls from on high, in particular that of one righteous and one unrighteous man (chs. 11–16). There follows a tour of the realms of the blessed and the damned, based in part on the visions of the Apocalypse of Peter. Throughout the account it is assumed that the rewards of the blessed are given temporarily until the soul returns to

the body for the final judgment day: “And they roused the soul saying: Soul take knowledge of your body which you have left, for in the day of resurrection you must return to that same body to receive what is promised to all the righteous” (ch. 14). One can assume that the torments described in such graphic detail are, likewise, preliminary to those yet to come at the resurrection.[137]

The torments of the damned have a good deal in common with those earlier assigned to Peter’s vision: here too there is a stress on the physicality of both ecstasy and torment, the former, in this case, being described in graphic terms reminiscent of the famous superlatives of Papias.[138] But there are also key differences from the author’s model.[139] Whereas the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous of the Old Testament are praised, there appears a strain of anti-Jewish sentiment in the statement of chapter 48: “See, Moses, what those of your people have done to the Son of God.” Of far greater significance is the heightened attention given to Christians. On one hand, the wilderness ascetics are praised early in the account, whereas those who do not fulfill their ascetic practices are roundly condemned (chs. 9–10; again, e.g., ch. 23). Among the blessed are the married souls who nonetheless remain chaste (ch. 22). On the other hand, those who fast but who are proud and who praise themselves cannot enter the city of Christ (ch. 24). Moreover, church people who are not totally committed to a Christian lifestyle are punished in boiling fire; these include those who spent some of their days in prayer, but others in sin, and who were involved in idle disputes; and those who took the eucharist but then committed fornication (ch. 31).

Yet more striking is the punishment suffered specifically by Christian leaders. There are gory eternal torments lying in wait for a presbyter who is punished severely for not fasting and for offering communion while in a state of fornication (ch. 34); for a bishop who was not just and did not pity widows and orphans (ch. 35); for a deacon who used the oblations for himself and committed fornication (ch. 36); for a reader who did not keep the precepts of God (ch. 36); for those who disparaged the Word of God and did not obey it (ch. 37); for those who stopped fasting too soon (ch. 39); and for would-be monks who did not live the life of a monk (ch. 40).

But above all there are the heretics, who falsely hold to a docetic Christology and deny the importance of the flesh. It is here that the real

polemic can be found. The worst punishment of all—"seven times greater than these" (ch. 40)—is the "well" filled with an unbearable stench, and peopled by "those who have not confessed that Christ came in the flesh and that the Virgin Mary bore him, and who say that the bread of the eucharist and the cup of blessing are not the body and blood of Christ" (ch. 41). Others are tormented by cold and gnashing of teeth and cubit-long worms with two heads: "They are those who say that Christ has not risen from the dead and that this flesh does not rise" (ch. 42).

Here then we have the implicit polemic of the earlier Apocalypse of Peter taken to an extreme and made explicit. Not only does the physicality of the afterlife emphasize the importance of the flesh in the face of those who deny it; the most horrendous torments are reserved precisely for such heretical naysayers. For this orthodox author there can be no crime more heinous or deserving of eternal and excruciating torment than the sin of denying that Christ himself came in the flesh and that the resurrection would be in the flesh. Eternity would indeed be a fleshly existence, as those who refused to acknowledge it would discover to their eternal horror.

1. Quotations taken from James Brashler and Roger Bullard, "Apocalypse of Peter," in *NHL*.

2. On the difference between a docetic and a separationist Christology, see Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 140–45, 212–19.

3. Cf. Havelaar, *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 190: "the idea of a division between the real Savior who cannot suffer and the material Jesus who is crucified is a common theme in the Nag Hammadi corpus."

4. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, "The Suffering Jesus and the Invulnerable Christ in the Gnostic *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), pp. 187–99; Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 179.

5. Havelaar, *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 186.

6. John D. Turner, "The Book of Thomas and the Platonic Jesus," in Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier, eds., *L'évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval / Louvain: Peeters, 2007), p. 601.

7. Turner suggests that the book may represent a secondary combination of two originally distinct treatises: (1) an older dialogue that had been

created by dissecting an earlier epitome of Plato's teaching on the soul and making it into a series of expositions on this teaching by Jesus in response to questions; and (2) a collection of dominical sayings reminiscent of Q, with woes and blessings. When the two works were combined, the whole was then attributed to Thomas. See Turner, "The Book of Thomas."

8. Quotations are taken from John D. Turner, "The Book of Thomas the Contender," in *NHL*.

9. It is not important to my purposes here to determine where the book fits more broadly within the Thomasine tradition of early Christianity. Turner argues that the book occupies a "median position" between the Gospel of Thomas and the Acts of Thomas, in terms of date, dominance of the figure of Thomas, and development of genre (it lies between a list of sayings and a full narrative). Moreover, in this sequence the notion of sexual renunciation becomes increasingly dominant from one book to the next. Paul-Hubert Poirer, however, does not think the three books can be linked together ("The Writings Ascribed to Thomas and the Thomas Tradition," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 295–307). Schenke goes even farther to argue that the Book of Thomas stands outside the Thomasine tradition (H.-M. Schenke, *Das Thomas Buch [Nag Hammadi-Codexes II, 7]*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989, 65).

0. Turner, "Book of Thomas and the Platonic Jesus," pp. 606–7. Turner's article enumerates numerous parallels with the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*.

1. Translations taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 303–35.

2. Contra DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 135.

3. Johannes Leipoldt, *Das Evangelium nach Thomas* TU 101 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967), p. 62.

4. *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 96.

5. *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 104.

6. See pp. 234–35.

7. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 192.

8. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 140.

9. Translation of Wesley Isenberg, *NHL*.

0. Moreover, Valantasis assumes that the "body" refers to the body of believers. But in fact the saying denigrates the body, rather than affirming it. DeConick proposes the same textual emendation for saying 80 as for saying 56.

1. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 110.

2. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 254; italics hers.

3. See also R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 58–62, who discusses the Platonic context for the problem of souls being united with bodies.

4. There are, of course, a large number of theories about the relationship of the letter to the Fourth Gospel, with nearly every possible view represented by reasonable scholars, including a range of views of the relationship of the two prologues. On all this, one can simply consult the commentaries. Since the epistle does not deal with problems involving the Jewish synagogue, but is instead concerned with a secessionist movement that almost certainly occurred later in the community's history, the simplest and now probably most widespread solution to the relationship of the books is that they derive from two authors living at different times and addressing situations out of a very similar tradition rooted in the same community. With respect to the similar prologues, the author of 1 John appears to try to imitate that of his more famous predecessor, and is not altogether successful in the attempt.

5. See *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979) and his valuable commentary *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982).

6. This is not the view of Brown himself, who thinks the secessionists simply undervalue the salvific importance of Jesus' humanity. This view, however, cannot explain all the polemical emphases of the letter, including the prologue. See my assessment in *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 153–57, esp. n. 66.

7. See ibid., p. 200, n. 63.

8. See ibid., pp. 153–55, and its discussion of 1 John 5:6.

9. I have borrowed much of the following two paragraphs from my discussion in ibid., pp. 155–56.

0. Among the sundry options, the one proposed by Strecker has considerable merit, that the neuter relative used four times in 1—despite the fact that it is neuter (which, of course, is the problem)—in conjunction with the περί

clause of 1b, "refers to nothing other than the Christ event to which the author testifies" (Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*. Hermeneia. Trans. Linda Maloney [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996; German original 1989], p. 10). But even more persuasive is Raymond Brown, that the pronoun refers to "that entity that became human" (so that the pre-existent Logos in some sense is depersonalized). *Epistles of John*, pp. 151–54.

1. P. 163. Brown goes on to claim that the author is not *really* indicating that he had real contact with Jesus, since he was writing much later and could not have been an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry. R. Schnackenburg too refuses to believe that the author could really be claiming to be an eyewitness, since he was not one (*The Johannine Epistles*, New York: Crossroads, 1992, ET of 7th German edition of 1984, original 1953, p. 55). Both of these exegetical opinions overlook the pseudepigraphic character of the author's claims. This oversight creates a contradiction in the interpretation. On one hand, Schneemelcher indicates that in the prologue the author is "expressing a prophetic self-consciousness in which he appropriates to himself the experience of a witness who actually saw and heard," but he then indicates that "1 John does not otherwise betray a 'prophetic self-consciousness'" (p. 55).
2. Without compelling reason, Judith Lieu asserts the contrary: that "the assertion that 'we have heard … we have seen' is not a claim to an eyewitness experience of the historical ministry of Jesus made by a group of the original disciples." Her logic is the same as Brown's and Schnackenburg's (see the preceding note): that since this author was not an eyewitness, he could not be claiming to be one. She too, then, fails to consider the possibility that the author wants to portray himself as an eyewitness, precisely in order to validate his claims about the real fleshly existence of Christ. As a result, she proposes a rather obscure and romantic understanding of the first-person pronoun in the prologue: "its chief effort is to invite its readers to be attuned to the echoes and associations of the unequivocal authority of sensory experience, to attest it, and to determine whether they will affirm it and, by affirming it, whether they will shape their own lives by the pattern of consequences that the rest of the letter will trace." In response I would say that this is precisely not the "chief effort" of the author. He instead wants his readers to know that he is an authority who has actually experienced the incarnate word of life as a physical, tangible entity, so that they can rest assured that Christ really did come in the flesh.

See Judith Lieu, *I, II, and III John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), pp. 35–43, quotation pp. 40–41.

3. See note 24.

4. See the discussion in Brown, *Epistles of John*, pp. 9–10.

5. *I, II, and III John*, p. 3.

6. A. Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1886), p. 14.

7. See notes 31 and 32 above; John Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*. SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), pp. 129–30.

8. Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, p. 14. It should be noted that the author's claim is quite different from that of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who does indeed say "we beheld his glory" (1:14), but does not claim to be an actual eyewitness. On the contrary, he appears to be claiming to speak of the glory revealed to all believers; he is one who has believed "without seeing" (20:29). Evidence for this interpretation comes at the end of the Gospel, where the author clearly indicates that he was not one of the disciples (20:30–31), and at the scene of the crucifixion where the author indicates that he himself is not the one who observed the event but that he derived his information from one who had (19:35).

9. Indeed, Strecker can maintain that a different author produced 1 John, on the basis of the facts that he does not call himself a πρεσβεύτερος, that the letter is of a different form (critically), and that there are different views of theology and church discipline ("what one finds here is an independent author in the Johannine school tradition"; *Johannine Letters*, p. xl). I do not find this view persuasive, in part because I think 2 John 7 is difficult to explain if not from the same author as 1 John 4:2–3. But it is not at all implausible that the author sent a general letter into broader circulation, claiming to be an eyewitness to what he attests, rather than simply to a single house church.

0. Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25.10.

1. A case could be made that the anonymous author of 1 John wanted to be known not only as a disciple who was in Jesus' physical presence, but also as the author of the Fourth Gospel; hence his attempt to imitate the Prologue of his predecessor.

2. *In Polycarpionam epistolarum Ignationarum syllogen annotationes* (Oxford), p. 29. For a full sketch of the manuscript tradition, see Vahan

Hovhanessian, *Third Corinthians: Reclaiming Paul for Christian Orthodoxy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 3–10.

3. *Histoire critique de la république des lettres* Tome X (Amsterdam/Utrecht, 1714), pp. 148–71.
4. J. Zohrab, *Astuatsashunch' Matean Hin Ew Nor Ktakarants'* (= Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; Venice: Srboyn Ghazaru, 1805; reprinted Delmar: Caravan Books, 1984), pp. 25–27.
5. In part II of *Collection of Authentic Records Belonging to the Old and New Testament* (London: William Whiston, 1727).
6. See Rowland E. Prothero, *The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals*, IV (New York: Scribner's, 1900), pp. 429–33.
7. *Das Sendschreiben der Korinther an den Apostel Paulus und das dritte Sendschreiben Pauli an die Korinther* (Heidelberg: C. F. Winter, 1823). For further information on manuscript discoveries, summarized here, see Steve Johnston, "La Correspondance apocryphe entre Paul et les Corinthiens: un pseudépigraphe paulinien au service de la polémique anti-gnostique de la fin du II siècle" (M.A. thesis, University of Laval, 2004), 1–30; and Hovhanessian, *Third Corinthians*, pp. 3–10.
8. "The Pseudo-Ephremian *Commentary on Third Corinthians:* A Study in Exegesis and Anti-Bardai-sanite Polemic," in *After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han J. W. Drijvers*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Alexander Cornelis Klugkist (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), pp. 51–63.
9. See the discussion in Hovhanessian, *Third Corinthians*, pp. 6–9.
0. *Acta Pauli: Aus der Heidelberger Koptischen Papyrushandschrift Nr. 1* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905), pp. 125–45.
1. *Papyrus Bodmer X–XII* (Geneva: Bibliotheque Bodmer, 1959). See as well his "La Correspondance apocryphe de saint Paul et des Corinthiens," in *Littérature et théologie pauliniennes* (Louvain: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), pp. 217–23.
2. Adolf Harnack, "Die apokryphen Briefe des Paulus an die Laodicener und Korinther," in *Apocrypha IV*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931), pp. 6–23.
3. "There are reasons to suppose that the correspondence was not written by the same author as the Acts of Paul." A. F. J. Klijn, "The Apocryphal Correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians," *VC* 17 (1963): 13.

4. One might be tempted to postulate, further, that the two letters were composed independently of one another. The second letter, from Paul to the Corinthians, can easily stand on its own, apart from the earlier set of inquiries of the first letter; moreover, in this letter Paul mentions neither the first letter nor the heretics who are its principal concern. In addition, whereas the first letter assumes that Paul has already been delivered from his legal troubles ("the Lord has delivered you from the godless," v. 8), in the second he is in prison (v. 1) and in chains (v. 34). The differences between the letters, however, are as difficult to explain on the hypothesis of the first being written later as an introduction to the second as on the standard view that both were written together, as a unit. Moreover, the opening statement of the second letter does appear to preserve an allusion to the first: "I marvel not that the teachings of the evil one had such rapid success" (in possible reference to "they overthrow the faith of some").
5. Gerard Luttikhuizen, "The Apocryphal Correspondence with the Corinthians and the Acts of Paul," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), pp. 75–92.
6. Translations are taken from J. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*.
7. The letter presents an interesting notion of the incarnation, unlike anything in Paul's New Testament letters. Here God is said to have sent the Holy Spirit into Mary so that Christ could be born of her (vv. 5, 13–14). God also sent a "portion of the Spirit" into the Jewish prophets, as a kind of preliminary to the sending of the Spirit into Mary. This appears to be a kind of Spirit Christology comparable to the Logos Christology of contemporary thinkers such as Justin (where the Logos is in the Greek philosophers, but becomes fully manifest in Christ).
8. At least, no scholar of the Western world. For anyone with residual doubts, S. Johnston devotes fifty-five pages to a demonstration ("La Correspondance apocryphe," pp. 78–133).
9. In my judgment M. Rist is precisely wrong to claim that the author's "indistinct echoes of Paul's words" were not "designed to give his composition an appearance of authenticity." See M. Rist, "III Corinthians as a Pseudepigraphic Refutation of Marcionism," *Iliff Review* 26 (1969): 55.
0. Rist, "III Corinthians," p. 58. Rist gives six very good points of comparison with what is known of Marcion and one with Apelles. Klijn ("Apocryphal Correspondence"), however, makes a valid objection to this

view: Apelles maintained that one angel, not a plural number of angels, was the creator. Rist sees this as a trivial difference.

1. Hérésie et orthodoxie selon la correspondance apocryphe entre les Corinthiens et l'Apôtre Paul," in *Orthodoxie et Hérésie dans l'Eglise ancienne*, ed. H. D. Altendorf. *Cahiers de la Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 17 (1993): 21–63.
2. "Über den apokryphen Briefwechsel des Apostels Paulus mit den Korinthern," *Theologische Boten* (1896).
3. Rist, "III Corinthians," pp. 130–31.
4. "Apocryphal Correspondence," p. 22.
5. Ibid., p. 91. Italics his.
6. "L'ensemble des conceptions gnostiques qui circulaient à son époque." *La correspondance apocryphe."* p. 222. A different approach to establishing the opposition is proposed in a recent study by Benjamin White, who suggests that rather than trying to identify the false teachers by what is said about them, it may be better to see how "Paul" is being constructed as their opponent; as it turns out, this Paul is very much like the Paul of the Pastoral epistles and of Irenaeus. The opponents, then, take contrary views. Benjamin L. White, "Reclaiming Paul? Reconfiguration as Reclamation in 3 Corinthians," *JECS* 17 (2009): 497–523.
7. Johnston gives a nice synoptic comparison of the two passages, but points out a key difference: whereas 1 Clement is simply interested in demonstrating that there will be a resurrection, 3 Corinthians stresses that it will specifically be a resurrection "of the flesh."
8. In support, for example, of Walter Bauer's claim that the problem addressed by 1 Clement is a group of Gnostics in Corinth. See *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, pp. 105–6.
9. See p. 433 below.
0. See note 66.
1. Quotations taken from the translation of Birger Pearson in Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*.
2. See Birger Pearson, "Melchizedek," in Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 597–98.
3. The fragmentary reference to the name Gamaliel is secure, in light of the rest of the text. The verb is unfortunately missing; "snatch away" is Pearson's hypothesis. In any event, the Sethian focus is clear.

4. Here and in the pages that follow I will use the translation of Knut Schäferdiek, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2.
5. Translation of Charles Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book Part II* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938), 191.
6. Ign. Eph. 7.2; my own translation, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1 in LCL.
7. "… die einfachste Lösung [scheint] die Annahme zu sein, daß in Melch der Grad der sekundären Verchristlichung der sethianischen Gnosis eine solche Stärke erreicht hat, daß es zu einer kategorialen Grenzüberschreitung gekommen ist und der Sethianismus hier seinen gnostischen Charakter verloren hat. Das heißt, Melch würde einen verchristlichten Sethianismus repräsentieren, der überhaupt nicht mehr gnostisch ist." "Melchisedek (NHC IX, 1), in Hans-Martin Schenke, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, and Ursula Ulrike Kaiser, eds., *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), p. 475.
8. See Carl Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung. Ein katholisch-apostolisches Sendschreiben des 2. Jh*. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1919).
9. *Le testament en Galilée de notre-Seigneur Jésus Christ* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1912).
0. See further Charles E. Hill, "The *Epistula Apostolorum:* An Asian Tract from the Time of Poly-carp," *JECS* 7 (1999): 1–53. J. de Zwaan bypasses the dating provided by chapter 17 in favor of the issues raised and resolved concerning the Quartodeciman controversy, but as a result dates the work almost certainly too late to 195 CE; "Date and Origin of the Epistle of the Eleven Apostles," in *Amicitiae Corolla: A Volume of Essays Presented to James Rendel Harris, D.Litt., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. H. G. Wood (London: University of London Press, 1933), 344–55. So too J. K. Elliott's claim that the "consensus" places the text in the third quarter of the second century does not take chapter 17 with sufficient seriousness (*The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 556). Options for the location of the composition are almost literally all over the map, Asia, Syria, and Alexandria being the leading suspects. In addition to the articles of Hill and de Zwaan, see A. Stewart-Sykes, "The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of *the Epistula Apostolorum*" *VC* 51 (1997): 416–38.
1. *Studien zur Epistula Apostolorum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965). The more recent full-length study of Julian Hills, *Tradition and Composition in the*

Epistula Apostolorum (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), is less concerned with the theological and polemical investments of the text than with its structure, composition, and the relation of tradition and redaction.

2. "Läßt sich weder als ein Dokument des Urchristentums noch der Gnosis noch des Frühkatholizismus begreifen." On docetism: "The fact that Jesus is risen in the flesh has therefore meaning only as a fact that is supposed to demonstrate the reliability of Jesus's teaching" ("Das Faktum, daß Jesus im Fleische auferstanden ist, hat mithin nur die Bedeutung eines Tatbeweises, der die Gläubigkeit der von Jesus verkündigten Lehre demonstrieren soll"). Further, "The determination of the Risen One's bodiliness serves only as proof and for the confirmation of the teaching concerning the resurrection of the flesh. The Epistula Apostolorum is thus quite distinct from the views of Ignatius and Irenaeus" ("Die Feststellung der Leiblichkeit des Auferstandenen dient nur zum Beweis und zur Bestätigung der Lehre von der allgemeinen Auferstehung im Fleische. Von den Anschauungen des Ignatius und des Irenäus ist die Epistula Apostolorum weit geschieden"; p. 60). I could not disagree more. Throughout his *Studien* Hornschuh uses an essentialized understanding of what it means to be "Christian" and shows that the Epistula Apostolorum does not stack up well against it.
3. Translations of C. Detlef G. Muller in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.
4. See p. 397.
5. "In the most worrisome fashion, the author thus touches upon the pseudepigraphal activity of the Gnostics who in addition to the general instruction during their public teaching had chosen in particular the post-resurrection period for their special revelations" ("Damit streift der Verfasser auf das bedenklichste der pseudepigraphische Schriftstellerei der Gnostiker, die neben der allgemeinen Unterweisung während der öffentlichen Lehrtätigkeit besonders die Zeit nach der Auferstehung für ihre Spezialoffenbarungen sich ausgesucht hatten"). Schmidt, *Gespräche*, p. 202.
6. *Gespräche*, p. 198.
7. "Man [wird] schwerlich bestreiten können, daß wichtige Partien des Briefes nicht anders zu verstehen sind denn als Widerlegung der Gnostiker," Hornschuh, *Studien*, p. 7. Hornschuh tried to be more precise in naming the opponents, and settled on a group of Basilideans (p. 94). Most scholars today are, rightly, more reserved in thinking that we can pinpoint

one Gnostic sect over another. Among other things, if the Basilideans were in view, why are they set under the guise specifically of Simon and Cerinthus? It is better to think here in terms of a general polemic against Gnostic teachings found among a number of groups.

8. See, e.g., Pheme Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

9. Hornschuh, *Studien*, p. 7.

0. Only the opening letter of the account, not the revelation dialogue, is forged.

1. The first critical edition was produced by Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1875), pp. 561–76.

2. Pervo is unusual in seeing the letter as something other than a pastiche; he wants to stress the epistolary character of the piece, as constructed, and to read it, then, with a generous spirit. See *Making of Paul*, pp. 106–9.

3. "Elle est en effet aussi anodine que possible." *Les actes de Paul et ses lettres apocryphes* … (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1913), p. 321.

4. "Der Brief [ist] ein armseliges Elaborat ohne jede persönliche Note des Verfassers ohne Spur von Häresie, ohne Tendenz und Zweck"; "Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe," *Bib 6* (1925): 190.

5. "Es ist übrigens nach Inhalt und Form die wertloseste Urkunde, die aus dem kirchlichen Altertum auf uns gekommen ist"; *Apocrypha IV: Die apokryphen Briefe des Paulus an die Laodicener und Korinther*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931), p. 3.

6. Viz., "Why Was the Insipid Letter to the Laodiceans Written?" *NTS* 48 (2002): 132–41.

7. Pink ("Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe") argued that the author of the Muratorian Fragment did not realize that the Marcionites had renamed Ephesians Laodiceans (as Tertullian indicates) and so supposed that a separate letter must have existed, not being familiar with the letter that we now have.

8. For a full listing, see Pink, "Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe."

9. See Burnet, "Pourquoi," p. 132.

00. Thus ibid., p. 133.

01. See Vouaux, *Les actes*, p. 320.

02. For Westcott see note 91; J. B. Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London: Macmillan, 1904), pp. 291–92. Lightfoot provided a retroversion to the "original" Greek.

03. See Harnack *Apocrypha IV*. Pink had argued that the Graecisms, cited by Lightfoot, do not require a Greek original, since so much of the letter is drawn from Pauline works originally penned in Greek. He goes on to argue that the letter draws on vocabulary invented by Tertullian (thus "dilectio" and "retractus") and so was written in Latin no earlier than the mid-third century. But the first occurrence of the terms in Tertullian does not prove that he invented them. Their appearance in the letter therefore indicates nothing about its original language or date.

04. Thus, for example, Vouaux, *Les actes* and Pink, "Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe."

05. Chrysostom, *Homily 12* on Col. 4:16.

06. The fullest statement of the view is found in *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott; eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der Katholischen Kirche*, "Beilage III: Das Apostolikon Marcion," part D: "Der Laodicener- und der Alexandrinerbrief" (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1924), pp. 134*–49*, which is based on an article published the previous year in *Sitzungsberichte der Preuß. Akademie*, Nov. 1, 1923.

07. "Diese Beobachtungen entscheiden: unser Brief ist eine Marcionitische Fälschung." *Marcion*, p. 143*.

08. "Pourquoi."

09. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, p. 229.

10. The fullest and best account of the discovery and of the codicological issues involved is in Peter van Minnen, "The Greek *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Jan Bremmer and István Czachesz, eds., *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), pp. 15–39.

11. G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period, A.D. 300–800* (London: University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), no. 41.

12. The first full study of the text of the Akhmim text was Dieterich's *Nekyia; Beiträge zur Erklärung der neuentdeckten Petrusapokalypse* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), conducted, obviously, prior to the discovery of the more accurate Ethiopic version.

13. Grébaut, "Littérature éthiopienne ps. Clémentine. La second venue du Christ et la resurrection des morts," *ROC* (1907): 139–51; (1910): 198–214, 307–23, 425–39; M. R. James, "A New Text of the Apocalypse of Peter," *JTS* 12 (1910/11): 36–54, 362–83, 573–83.
14. Thus Müller: "That the Ethiopic version is authentic and offers the original text of the Apocalypse of Peter, albeit in parts somewhat distorted, can scarcely be contested any longer today." C. Detlef G. Müller in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.625.
15. "The Greek *Apocalypse*," p. 28.
16. See Dennis D. Buchholz, *Your Eyes Will Be Opened: A Study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 17. Buchholz counts twelve direct references to the account and eighteen indirect references (pp. 20–81). A more conservative presentation can now be found in Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *Das Petrusevangelium und die Petrusapokalypse: Die griechischen Fragment mit deutscher und englischer Übersetzung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 87–99.
17. Richard Bauckham, "The *Apocalypse of Peter*: A Jewish Christian Apocalypse from the Time of Bar Kokhba," *Apocrypha* 5 (1994): 7–111; reprinted in Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 160–258. Original pages are indicated here. Buchholz, *Your Eyes Will Be Opened*.
18. Translations taken from C. Detlef G. Müller in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.
19. Van Minnen, "The Greek *Apocalypse*."
20. Eibert Tigchelaar, "Is the Liar Bar Kokhba? Considering the Date and the Provenance of the Greek (Ethiopic) *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Bremmer and Czachesz, eds., *The Apocalypse of* Peter, pp. 63–77.
21. James A. Brooks, "Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon," *SecCent* 9 (1992): 41–55.
22. *Apocalypse of Peter*, pp. 19–20.
23. István Czachesz, "The Grotesque Body in the *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Bremmer and Czachesz, eds., *The Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 108.
24. See Callie Callon, "Sorcery, Wheels, and Mirror Punishment in the *Apocalypse of Peter*," *JECS* 18 (2010): 29–49.
25. "The Grotesque Body."

26. Terence V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies*: "It is therefore difficult to determine the precise reason for the writer's appeal to the Peter-figure." Smith goes on to suggest that the references to Peter's martyrdom in Rome (Eth 14, Rainer fragment) may provide a clue, but then decides not: "though the martyrdom is referred to, the writer does not attempt to use it as a buttress for any Petrine/Roman primacy." So too he thinks that a concern for persecution related to Peter cannot explain it (p. 48).
27. Ch. 14, translation of Buchholz.
28. *Your Eyes Will Be Opened*, p. 396.
29. The most important recent edition is T. Silverstein and A. Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions* (Geneva: P. Cramer 1997).
30. Translation of H. Duensing and Aurelio de Santos Otero, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.
31. Thus, for example, Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 616.
32. T. Silverstein "The Date of the 'Apocalypse of Paul,'" *MS* 24 (1962): 335–48; P. Piovanelli, "Les origines de l'Apocalypse de Paul reconsidérées," *Apocrypha* 4 (1993): 25–64, esp. 45–59.
33. Anthony Hilhorst, "The *Apocalypse of Paul*: Previous History and Afterlife," in Jan Bremmer and István Czachesz, eds., *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), pp. 1–22. Piovanelli disputes these data, claiming that neither of the passages of Origen need necessarily refer to the Apocalypse and noting that all of our surviving witnesses derived from the fifth-century edition of the text (so that there are no physical remains of the earlier version). Duensing and de Santos Otero concur, marshaling the odd argument that since Sozomen indicates that "none of the ancients" knew the document, Origen could not have quoted it.
34. Augustine *Tract. Ioh*. 98, 8. Translation of John Rettig, *Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John* FC, 90 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1994).
35. *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19. Translation of Chester D. Hartranft, *NPNF*, second series, vol. 2.
36. See p. 125. A comparable account is found, most famously, in Dictys. For other discovery narratives, see V. Saxer, *Morts, Martyrs, reliques, en Afrique Chrétienne aux premiers siècle* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1980,

245–46); F. Bovon, "The Dossier on Stephen, the First Martyr, *HTR* 96 (2003): 279–315; Pierluigi Piovanelli, "The Miraculous Discovery of the Hidden Manuscript, or the Paratextual Function of the Prologue to the Apocalypse of Paul," in Bremmer and Czachesz, *The Visio Pauli*, pp. 23–49; and esp. W. Speyer, *Bücherfunde*.

37. Piovanelli has argued that by the time of the writing—after the triumph of Christianity starting in 313 CE—the idea of an apocalyptic renewal of the heavens and earth had given way to an individualized judgment in the afterlife. That may be true enough, but it almost certainly was not a shift created by the conversion of the emperor and the massive shifts of religious allegiance that occurred in its wake, since we have earlier evidence of this eschatological transformation, most notably in the Apocalypse of Peter of the mid-second century.

38. Duensing and de Santos Otero (p. 715) oddly enough take this as an indication of the *late* date of the account.

39. Czachesz finds it significant that there is nothing said about the torment of Christian persecutors, and argues on these grounds that the final recension must have occurred some time after Constantine. Thus "Torture in Hell and Reality. The *Visio Pauli*," in Bremmer and Czachesz, eds., *The Visio Pauli*, pp. 130–43.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Forgeries Arising from Later Theological Controversies

If the various theological controversies from the end of the third century and into the fourth generated a large number of literary forgeries, most of them have since been lost. The ones that survive are not modern discoveries but old standards, known throughout the ages because, in no small measure, these authors were unusually successful in their deceitful endeavors. One of the most historically significant of these works was the forged Ignatian letters, to which I will devote the greatest attention in this chapter. But we would do well to return to two other forgeries that we have examined in previous contexts, as, in part, their production was spurred by the theological controversies of their day.

THE ABGAR CORRESPONDENCE

We have already discussed the forged correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar Uchama in the context of anti-Jewish polemic.[1] These letters do not only malign Jews for their role in the death of Jesus, however; they also function in a more patently theological way. As Han J. W. Drijvers has shown, the letters appear to have been forged as an anti-Manichaean polemic.

As we have seen, the letters appear in the context of the larger Abgar legend, known from both Eusebius and the *Doctrina Addai*. My primary concern here is not with the legend per se. Even though it is certainly a fabrication of later times, it is not a forgery. The correspondence at the beginning of the legend, however, is forged, or rather doubly forged, one letter allegedly written by the king of Edessa and the other by Jesus himself. Taken as a Gestalt, the letters and the legend have been subject to considerable dispute. Burkitt argued that the complex grew out of a historical kernel, in which the Christian conversion of Abgar VIII the Great (177–212 CE) was retrojected back onto Abgar V Uchama (ruler: 4 BCE–7 CE and 13–50 CE) in order to provide a greater antiquity for the church of Edessa.[2] W. Bauer argued, in contrast, that the entire legend, including the

letters, was an invention ex nihilo, meant to support the claims of the orthodox party in Edessa to have an apostolic origin.[3] J. Segal argued that the complex originated as a Christian parallel and counterpart to the story of the conversion to Judaism of the royal dynasty of Adiabene, as preserved in Josephus.[4] And there have been other theories.[5]

In a series of publications Drijvers has shown the problems with these various views, before reaching his own conclusion[6]: "The Abgar legend likely arose at the end of the third century in Edessa as a propaganda text for the orthodoxy of that era."[7] Specifically, the propaganda is directed against a dominant form of Syrian Manichaeanism.

As I argued earlier, however, in contrast to Drijvers, the letters appear to have originated independently of the legend.[8] Even so, they too, as well as the legend, may have arisen during an anti-Manichaean campaign by orthodox Christians in Edessa. The grounds for seeing the correspondence in this light are given by Drijvers, who notes not only that letters were important to the Manichaean tradition in general, but also that, as known from Augustine, the Manichees claimed to have letters of Christ in particular (*Contra Faust*. 28.4). There are convincing reasons for seeing the Abgar correspondence as a counterforgery designed to undercut the claims (and possibly even the letters) of the Manichees.

Especially significant, in this regard, is Jesus' promise to Abgar in the second letter: "After I have ascended I will send you one of my disciples to heal your illness and to provide life both to you and to those who are with you."[9] This appears to be an allusion to John 16:7–8 and its promise of the sending of the Spirit: "It is better for you that I depart; for if I do not depart, the Comforter will not come to you; and if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convince the world.…" As Drijvers notes, Mani understood himself to have been sent in fulfillment of this Johannine promise. The letter of Jesus, then, provides a counterclaim. Moreover, Mani understood himself to be sent from God as a healer: "I am a physician [doctor] from Babylon," he says to the Sassanic king Shapur, whom he then heals—a close parallel to what is said to be about to happen to Abgar, not through the coming of Mani but through his counter, the apostle to be sent from Jesus.[10] Drijvers concludes: "It becomes clear that the reply Jesus sends to Abgar is a trenchant version of the saying concerning the Paraclete, which is perhaps intended to counter Manichaean claims and the

Manichaean mission."[11] For this correspondence, Christianity will establish itself with the appearance of Jesus' apostle, not with the coming of missionaries from Mani.[12]

Drijvers notes that there is an internal discrepancy between the letter of Jesus and the legend of Addai. The letter claims that Jesus will send an apostle to Abgar, but in the legend, it is Judas Thomas who does so. This is "an anomaly" in the sequence of the narrative."[13] But neither Drijvers nor anyone else who sees the letters as, originally, a piece, has an adequate explanation for the discrepancy. In fact, as seen earlier, the disjuncture is easiest accounted for by assuming that the letters and legend both sprang from the same polemical impulse, but were only secondarily added together. This would explain, as well, why they had separate histories of transmission (Egeria, for example, knows the letters but betrays no knowledge of the legend).[14]

At the same time, the impulse behind the legend appears to have been very much like that behind the earlier letters. As Drijvers repeatedly emphasizes, one of Mani's first apostles, sent in 240 CE into the Roman empire where he healed and converted the queen of Palmyra, Zenobia, was named Addai. This cannot be a coincidence. Now the one (a Christian apostle) who comes to Edessa to heal and convert the King is Addai. Or, one might think, the *real* Addai: "This is an ingenious piece of propaganda: A *Christian* apostle in rivalry with Mani, whose best-known apostle was actually called Addai."[15] "The Christian Addai is a borrowing from Manichaeism."[16] Drijvers points out other, probably noncoincidental, similarities between Manichean legends and the Abgar tradition.[17] The conclusion to be drawn from these parallels is clear: "The Abgar legend is a document of Christian propaganda which originated in a historical situation in Edessa at the end of the third century, in which the Manichean version of the Christian faith and the Manichean mission were sharply threatening orthodoxy, which formed only a minority."[18]

This propaganda campaign, however, took place in stages. It started with a set of forged letters between Jesus and the King of Edessa, which had their own history of transmission; it continued with a similarly oriented set of stories; it came to fruition in the combining of the two sets of documents. The combination yielded a notable inconsistency that was overlooked in

antiquity, and is still ignored by scholars today. But the final product ultimately proved valuable for the orthodox community of Edessa.

THE PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE HOMILIES AND RECOGNITIONS

We have already considered the Pseudo-Clementines in relation to their "Jewish" orientation and their resultant anti-Pauline (or possibly anti-Marcionite) polemic. Here I can say just a few words about other theological issues involved in their production.

The final editions of both the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* bear the marks of the time of their redaction, as both appear to have been edited sometime in the fourth century by Christians with "Arian" tendencies.[19] There is little to indicate that this redactor was intent on advancing his Arian views with polemical intent, however, and so I need say but little about the matter.

The common view of the *Homilies* was expressed well over a century ago in an influential study by Charles Bigg. From his analysis of *Hom*. 20:7, Bigg concluded: "If we suppose that we have in the present *Homilies* the product of an Arian Christian of Syriac nationality who fancied that he found in Ebionitism a solution of the great problem—a historical and quasi-philosophical doctrine of the Arian savior—we should not perhaps go far wrong."[20]

This general perspective is widely shared today, for example, in the most recent full-length study of Nicole Kelley.[21] So too *Rec*. 3.2–11 has long been recognized as containing an Arian perspective. The theology of the passage was so problematic—confused, confusing, or dangerous—that Rufinus tells us that he refused to include it in his translation:

> There are also in both collections some dissertations concerning the Unbe-gotten God and the Begotten, and on some other such subjects, which, to say nothing more, are beyond our comprehension. These, therefore, as being beyond our powers, I have chosen to reserve for others, rather than to produce in an imperfect state.[22]

This is not to say that there are not theological polemics in the Pseudo-Clementines. Indeed, Kelley has made a compelling case that the books do

have polemical intent. Eschewing questions of sources, she examines the final form of the text of the *Recognitions* for what it can tell us about the concerns of the editor, living in fourth-century Syria. In her view, the prominent motif that "true knowledge" can come only from the prophets of Scripture, and in particular from the True Prophet (Christ), is meant to function polemically, in order to counter other popular avenues of knowledge widely used in the author's environment. In particular, the author/editor is intent on combating those who insist on the epistemological importance of both astrology and philosophy. That is why the heroes of the tale are shown to be experts in both disciplines, and yet converts away from them. They personally know what astrology and philosophy can provide, and they have realized their ultimate shortcomings: "Despite its insistence on its heroes' expertise in the different paths to knowledge, the text also suggests that philosophy and astrology cannot really provide the access to true knowledge which they claim.… True knowledge comes only from prophets."[23]

The author was confronted with a maelstrom of religious opinion, belief, and doctrine in his fourth-century Syrian environment. Rather than attack any one set of false teachings, he takes them on all at once, setting forth the true understanding of religion in opposition to any who stand in a different tradition or take another theological view. As Kelley summarizes:

> In an environment characterized by a multitude of competing truth claims, the *Recognitions* functions as a multi-pronged attack not just against *one* group such as the Marcionites or Pauline Christians, but against several different varieties of belief. In this way the text redescribes the field of competition, so that it ceases to be a bewildering array of rival religious claimants and becomes something more manageable: a choice between prophetic and false knowledge, and ultimately a choice between salvation or damnation.[24]

THE PSEUDO-IGNATIAN LETTERS

Arguably the most historically influential set of forgeries of the late fourth century are the Pseudo-Ignatian letters. As has long been recognized, these

were produced in the context of the Christological controversies racking the church at the time. Over the centuries they came to be used in a wide variety of other contexts, most notably in the wake of the English Reformation, in the numerous vitriolic exchanges over the validity of church hierarchy between the likes of Anglican Archbishop and scholar extraordinaire James Ussher and the young but outspoken Puritan John Milton.[25]

In addition to the seven Ignatian letters widely regarded as authentic today, ten other letters were circulated at various times and places in the medieval and early modern period. These ten come in two corpora. One corpus appears to have been a late medieval addition to the collection, and so will not concern us here. This comprises four letters, two from Ignatius to John, the disciple of Jesus, one addressed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the last a reply from Mary to Ignatius. The forger of these short missives appears to have had access to the so-called Long Recension of Ignatius, about which I will speak in a moment, in particular the forged letter of Ignatius to Mary of Cassabola, which is addressed to χριστόφορος θυγάτηρ Μαρία, christifera filia Maria. The letter to the Blessed Virgin uses the same epithet, "christiferae mariae suus Ignatius" and indicates that the author has written to her before. These four letters are only in Latin, probably their original language. Lightfoot plausibly suggested that they date no earlier than the eleventh century. Nonetheless, the forger was inordinately successful with his deceit: there are far more manuscripts of this correspondence than of the Long Recension itself, and far more quotations from it. As Lightfoot indicates, "in some quarters indeed S. Ignatius was only known through them."[26]

The remaining six forgeries circulated with heavily interpolated versions of the seven authentic Ignatian letters. For reasons we will see, it is almost universally thought that the interpolator and the forger were one and the same; taken together, it is these interpolated and forged letters that are usually referred to as the Long Recension.

The forgeries involve letters of Ignatius to the churches of Tarsus, Antioch, and Philippi; a personal letter to Hero, his successor to the bishopric of Antioch; a letter from Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius; and his reply. These six letters, along with the interpolated versions of the seven authentic letters, were known to be "Ignatius" until the mid-seventeenth

century, when critical examinations of Ussher and others, and important manuscript discoveries, changed the picture. Problems were initially detected through comparisons of the texts of the letters with quotations of Ignatius in the writings of Eusebius and Theodoret. The differences were so stark that it was difficult, as Ussher indicated, to imagine "that one was reading the same Ignatius who was read in antiquity" (eundem legere se Ignatium qui veterum aetate legebatur).[27] In addition, it was noted that the Long Recension (the only one known at the time) contained serious anachronisms and revealing blunders, such as its references to Basilides and Theodotus among the false teachers Ignatius opposed (Trall. 11), when in fact they lived long after his day, and when he named Ebion a heresiarch (Philad. 6), as Tertullian and those after him had done. Moreover, it was noted that Eusebius knew of only seven letters—casting immediate doubts on the other six (*H.E.* 3.36).

Ussher was particularly taken by the fact that several late medieval writers,[28] including the thirteenth-century Robert Grossteste of Lincoln, cited the letters of Ignatius in a textual form that was different and shorter than that otherwise known. Ussher reasoned that an alternative textual tradition must have once existed, at least in England. He embarked on a mission to find remnants of this other tradition, and was rewarded in uncovering two Latin manuscripts that contained the seven Eusebian letters in a shorter form, which coincided with the medieval citations of the text, lacking the passages so obviously tied to the theological and ecclesiastical concerns of the fourth century (although these manuscripts included the additional, forged letters as well). On the basis of his discovery, in 1644 Ussher published a new Latin edition of the Ignatian corpus: just the Eusebian letters in the noninterpolated form (although Ussher considered the letter to Polycarp spurious).[29]

Two years later, Ussher's views were confirmed by Isaac Voss's publication of a Greek manuscript from Florence that preserved six of the Eusebian letters in their shortened form—all but the letter to the Romans, which had a separate history of transmission.[30] Finally, in 1689 the French scholar T. Ruinart published the Greek text of Romans as uncovered in a tenth-century manuscript from Paris, making then the original form of the authentic corpus completely available.[31]

Debates over the full extent of the authentic Ignatian corpus continued to rage after the seventeenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century the flames of controversy were stoked by William Cureton, who claimed to have discovered manuscript evidence of an "original" corpus containing only condensed versions of the letters to Polycarp, Ephesians, and Romans.[32] But with the massively documented studies of Theodore Zahn and J. B. Lightfoot, the seven-letter corpus in the uninterpolated form posited and then discovered by Ussher and his successors was put on solid ground.[33] The twentieth century saw renewed questions, as authors such as R. Weijenborg, R. Joly, and J. Rius Camps, and most recently R. M. Hübner and T. Lechner, argued that some, or all, of the letters of the Middle Recension (= the uninterpolated seven letters known to Eusebius) were forged.[34] The majority of scholars remains unconvinced, however, and I take the common view here: the seven "Eusebian" letters go back to Ignatius (Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrneans, and Polycarp). These were interpolated and six additional letters were forged (Tarsians, Antiochians, Hero, Philippians, Mary Cassobola, and from Mary Cassobola), creating the Long Recension.[35]

The Author

It is widely and almost certainly correctly thought that the same person who interpolated the authentic Ignatian letters forged the remaining six. As Zahn and Lightfoot exhaustively demonstrated, the interpolations and the forgeries share many of the same verbal and stylistic features, ecclesiastical views, practical concerns, polemical targets, theological positions, and uses of Scripture; sometimes they even replicate the same passages and similar paraphrases. With respect to theological investments, for example, Lightfoot has argued that the "same doctrines are maintained, the same heresies assailed, and the same theological terms employed."[36] Amelungk has provided charts of the remarkable parallels between the forgeries and the interpolations, claiming that four-fifths of the material of the former is paralleled in the latter. Of the letter to Hero he claims that it is "actually plagiarized from the [letter] to Polycarp."[37]

The only serious challenge to the unity of authorship has come from Jack Hannah, who claimed that Lightfoot was right that the forger of the

additional letters produced his work in the fourth century, but argued that the textual affinities of the Scripture citations in the interpolations indicate that they were made by a different person two centuries earlier, about 140 CE in Ephesus, "probably within twenty-five years of the originals."[38] The interpolations were then used by the forger for his subsequent creations. This is an interesting view, but it was demolished in the one article devoted to its refutation, by Milton Brown, who effectively reasserted the traditional view.[39]

This traditional view maintains that the author was writing in the second part of the fourth century. Numerous features of the forged materials (including here, for the sake of convenience, the interpolations under the rubric of "forged") show that they were written long after Ignatius' day, not least the extensive citation of the writings that eventually became the Scriptures of the New Testament, not cited as canonical authorities by Ignatius himself. We will be considering this use of Scripture anon. There are also several telling anachronisms in the text, including not just the post-Ignatian heresiarchs of Tralles 11, already mentioned, but also a striking list of later church offices in Antiochians 12: "the sub-deacons, the readers, the singers, the doorkeepers, the laborers, the exorcist, the confessors … the keepers of the holy gates."[40] As Lightfoot notes, the first mention of the office of laborers is in the rescript of Constantius of 357 CE; the offices of doorkeepers and singers are first mentioned in in the canons of the Council of Laodicea of 363 CE. Moreover, "the fact that the writer can put such language into the mouth of S. Ignatius without any consciousness of a flagrant anachronism would seem to show that these offices were not very new when he wrote."[41]

Somewhat less obvious, but equally compelling and of particular interest to our concerns here, the forger, as we will see, uses a good deal of coded theological language that, despite its frequent subtlety, betrays a concern for the Christological debates of the mid to late fourth century.

What is yet more striking, we appear to have two other works from the hand of this same author, in one of which he names himself. As we have already seen, the forger of the Pseudo-Ignatians appears also to have forged the Apostolic Constitutions, another work with polemical intent, not written in the name of a one-time companion of the apostles, but of the apostles themselves, and allegedly delivered by Ignatius's near contemporary

Clement of Rome.[42] It is now also widely recognized, based on the investigative work of D. Hagedorn, that the forger also produced a Commentary on Job, and that his name was Julian.[43]

In the manuscript tradition, this commentary is attributed to Origen, but that cannot be right, as Hagedorn shows. Not only does the theology differ from Origen's in significant ways, but the book also mentions Lucian of Antioch as a person of the past; Lucian, however, died some fifty years after Origen. The catenae sometimes ascribe the work to an unspecified Julian, which has often been taken to be Julian of Halicarnassus. But R. Draguet long ago showed that this cannot be right either: the commentary represents an arianizing theology of the second half of the fourth century.[44] One manuscript of the catenae attributes it instead to Julian, a deacon of Antioch; and in fact Julian is named in the prologue of the commentary itself. This then is probably the author; he cannot, however, be identified with anyone else who bears the name from the period. All that we can learn about him comes from the works—one orthonymous and two forged—that he left behind.

The benefit of identifying the author of the Pseudo-Ignatians as Julian is that it helps solidify our knowledge of his views and perspectives, which are less guarded in the Job Commentary than elsewhere. The reasons are transparent: in his other two works he is claiming to be other people and so he was compelled to present his views under the guise of others. As a result, his theological views are often more opaque, most obviously in the Pseudo-Ignatians themselves, where a number of scholars, basing their judgments only on what was available to them, the texts themselves, have argued incessantly concerning the doctrinal investments of the forger, most maintaining that the author was one kind of Arian or another (e.g., Zahn, Harnack, Amelungk, Perler) or, instead, Apollinarian (Funk, Diekamp). A number of scholars have proposed specific authors—Eusebius of Emesa, Evagrius Ponticus, Euzoius—or persons closely connected with them.[45] Surveying the discussions up to his time, Hagedorn concludes that there is simply no *opinio communis*.[46]

In the commentary, on the other hand, the author was not hampered by the demands of his pseudepigraphic art from presenting in more straightforward fashion his own theological perspective. And here it is quite clear that he is an "Arian" of what was once called a "strong" sort, someone

who would have been comfortable in many ways with the positions of, say, an Aetius or Eunomius.[47]

Hagedorn makes a compelling case that Julian authored all three works, on the basis of striking commonalities among them in theological views, dogmatic terminologies, topoi, and style. He provides a list of thirty-five points of contact between the Job Commentary and the Apostolic Constitutions. Both works often deal with precisely the same topics, using precisely the same somewhat unusual expressions.[48] It is virtually impossible to imagine, as he notes, that two authors could independently attest such verbatim agreements in so many instances. Either two authors used the same source, or one author heavily edited or used the work of the other, or they are the same person. A careful analysis leads to the final result: Julian is the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions.[49]

Verbal parallels between the Job Commentary and Pseudo-Ignatius are also significant. Hagedorn cites numerous instances, most of them impressive. As just three examples:

ὢ πάντων δαιμόνων πονηρότερον ἐκ κακονοίας δαιμόνιον (Job Comm. 24.14)
ὢ πάντων πονηρῶν πνευμάτων πονηρότερον ἐκ κακονοίας πνεῦμα (Philipp. 11)

σοφὸς τοῦ κακοποιῆσαι. Τὸ δὲ καλὸν ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν ἀγνοεῖ (Job Comm. 292.3)
σοφὸς γάρ ἐστι τοῦ κακοποιῆσαι. Τὸ δὲ καλὸν ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν ἀγνοεῖ (Philipp. 4)

καὶ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐκστήσας τοὺς οὐδὲν αὐτὸν ἀδικήσαντας (Job Comm. 299.2)
καὶ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐκστήσας τοὺς οὐδὲν ἀδικήσαντάς σε (Philipp. 11)

On the basis of such verbatim similarities, Hagedorn concludes strongly: "The only possible explanation for the topical and linguistic/stylistic parallels between the three works is the identity of their author."[50]

Moreover, this author, Julian, shows his theological cards in the Commentary on Job. A key passage is the loaded comment on Job 37:22–23:[51]

> There is no one who is similar (οὐκ ἔχων τὸν ὁμοιούμενον) to him [ὁ παντοκράτωρ] with respect to his being or his power. In being because he is ἀγέννητος; in power because he is the father of the son. Nor is anyone else the cause of all things or the παντοκράτωρ; nor is there another mediator of the genesis of these things except the μονογενὴς Θεός.. (There follows a citation of John 1:1–3). He is

not the Word as a "voice" nor is he God, in the sense of having no beginning (ἄναρχος); but he is "Word" in the sense of being born directly from the will and power, not by the suffering of nature (οὐ πάθει τῆς φύσεως), not through a division of his being (οὐ διαιρέσει τῆς οὐσίας)..... Great is the glory of the All powerful; great is the honor due to him … ; he is incomparable both in nature and in power (ἀσυγκρίτου καὶ φύσει καὶ δυνάμει).. There is nothing equal to him [of the same substance] or like him (οὔτε οὖν ὁμοούσιόν τι ἐξ αὐτοῦ . . . οὔτε ὁμοιούσιον).. For he is incomparable, and we will find no other that is like him and his power (ἀσύγκριτος γάρ ἐστι καὶ. οὐχ εὑρήσομεν ἄλλον ὅμοιον αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ).

There is no one who is similar (οὐκ ἔχων τὸν ὁμοιούμενον) to him [ὁ παντοκράτωρ] with respect to his being or his power. In being because he is ἀγέννητος; in power because he is the father of the son. Nor is anyone else the cause of all things or the παντοκράτωρ; nor is there another mediator of the genesis of these things except the μονογενὴς Θεός.. (There follows a citation of John 1:1–3). He is not the Word as a "voice" nor is he God, in the sense of having no beginning (ἄναρχος); but he is "Word" in the sense of being born directly from the will and power, not by the suffering of nature (οὐ πάθει τῆς φύσεως), not through a division of his being (οὐ διαιρέσει τῆς οὐσίας)..... Great is the glory of the All powerful; great is the honor due to him … ; he is incomparable both in nature and in power (ἀσυγκρίτου καὶ φύσει καὶ δυνάμει).. There is nothing equal to him [of the same substance] or like him (οὔτε οὖν ὁμοούσιόν τι ἐξ αὐτοῦ . . . οὔτε ὁμοιούσιον).. For he is incomparable, and we will find no other that is like him and his power (ἀσύγκριτος γάρ ἐστι καὶ. οὐχ εὑρήσομεν ἄλλον ὅμοιον αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ).

This strong rejection of both ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος shows Julian's allegiances. For Hagedorn he was a "true-blood Arian"—specifically a disciple of Aetius or Eunomius. Since arguments over the term ὁμοούσιος

did not appear until some thirty years after Nicea, starting with the Synod of Sirmium in 357 CE, this work must date sometime after that. And since, in his view, the neo-Arians did not survive the purge of Theodosius and the Council of Constantinople (381 CE), the work probably dates somewhat earlier. Hagedorn suggests a date between 357–365 and argues that the work was produced in Syria.[52]

This date works well for the forgery of letters in the name of Ignatius of Antioch as well. But several caveats are in order. For one thing, it is—as already intimated—inordinately difficult to get a handle on the theological views presented in the Pseudo-Ignatian letters themselves, in no small measure because so many nuances are involved with their language. Moreover, if we accept the identity of authorship among the three works of Julian, this does not mean he has expressed exactly the same views in all three. In no small measure that is because authors' views often shift over a period of time, especially in a period where theological niceties were being thrashed about and refined, and borders were constantly shifting between what was acceptable and what was execrable. At no time was that more true than in the period between the second quarter and the end of the fourth century. As two extreme cases from opposing ends of the spectrum, there is Arius, who at the end of his life claimed to support the decisions of Nicea, and Marcellus of Ancyra, who retracted many of his most distinctive views once they could not stand up either to criticism or the test of time.[53] We should not, in short, simply assume that if Julian wrote both the Commentary to Job and the Pseudo-Ignatian forgeries, the theology between the works will be identical. In fact, there are many similarities, as the forged works embrace some kind of "Arian" perspective and attack views endorsed by Marcellus and his followers who supported a miahypostatic (to use Lienhard's phrase) view. But there are differences as well, and it is important not to suppose that the author was strictly neo-Arian at the time he produced his works.[54] On the contrary, as we will see, the Pseudo-Ignatians appear to take several stances that run counter to traditional neo-Arian views.

Purpose of the Forgeries

Possibly the most important aspect of the Pseudo-Ignatians has been almost entirely overlooked by previous scholars interested in learning the

motivation behind the forgeries (and interpolations). This investigation has always proceeded by looking carefully at the nuances of the author's theological affirmations, to see whether he can best be described as a Nicene, Apollinarian, "semi-Arian," neo-Arian,[55] and so on. These affirmations are then set down in categories provided by systematic theology. This approach, however, has almost always missed the forest for the trees. In particular, scholars have worked hard to identify the author's theological alignments without asking why he may have wanted to create the forged materials in the first place. Thus, for example, the justly great Light-foot, who argues that Pseudo-Ignatius cannot be located precisely: the author has some Arian leanings but is not exactly Arian, he is somewhat Apollinarian, but not really. Yet Lightfoot, in the end, never asks why the letters were forged. This is a question, in fact, that has scarcely ever been raised.

It is important to recognize that these letters were not meant to be a set of theological treatises, produced in the way modern systematic theologians produce theirs. As we will see, the letters are largely polemical, ostensibly, though not really, addressed to certain people and in almost every instance dealing with situations of conflict. This is widely known. But what has not been sufficiently appreciated is that the letters do not explicitly attack positions of the author's own day. They instead appear, on the surface, to be directed to theological aberrations of the second century, aberrations that the forger—incorrectly, as it turns out—seems to have thought were already a problem in the early years of that century, in the days of Ignatius. The targets of all the explicit polemic are such Christological heresies as psilanthropism (where Christ is not divine but a "mere man"); Gnosticism and Marcionism (with the claim that the unknown God did not create this world and that Christ is not the son of the creator); the related, but not coterminous, problem of docetism (where Christ is not a human at all, but is fully God); and Sabellianism (where Christ and God the Father are not separate beings but one being in two modes of existence).

It is true that the proto-orthodox attacks against these various second-century heresies, in the works, say, of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian, were replicated in the fourth century, as enemies of various theological persuasions accused their adherents of following tenets long denounced as heretical. Marcellus, for example, was regularly and roundly charged with being a kind of Sabellius redivivus, and accusations of psilanthropism were

mutually leveled by heresiologists against one another.[56] But the striking feature of Pseudo-Ignatius' denunciations of heresies in nearly all of his explicit polemic is that, at least on the surface, they are phrased not in the sophisticated language of fourth-century Arian controversies, but in language that was, for the most part (though not entirely) appropriate two hundred years earlier. No wonder Hannah could think that the interpolations, at least, were roughly contemporaneous with Ignatius's own generation; on the surface they sound as if they are.

At the same time, there are places where the author used coded language that was sufficiently nuanced to express some of his key theological views. He evidently did so because he wanted to provide support for his own perspective and to show the genealogical lines of the tradition that could be traced back to a known postapostolic person—one known to the apostles—whom Eusebius indicates was the second bishop of Antioch after Euodius. The author forged these letters to show what Ignatius would have said as a leading heresiologist of his time, but more than this, as a reputed authority, both as the bishop of a major see, and above all as one of the first known Christian martyrs. As a concerned church leader, "Ignatius" naturally opposes false teaching, and this forger thinks, wrongly, that he knows what those teachings would have been in Ignatius's day. In some cases, he is off by several decades. Of equal importance, however, is that in the course of constructing this picture of Ignatius the martyr-heresiologist, the author slips in, here and there, theological views that are his real and ultimate point. These are subtle and hard for us to track, but they are in there, embracing some kind of "Arian," or at least dyohypostatic (again, Lienhard's phrase) understanding of the godhead. The other heresies that are explicitly attacked, in other words, serve as "covers" for the real issues that the forger wants this authority to address.

And so, the solution to the dilemma of the Pseudo-Ignatian forgeries (including the interpolations) is to see the ostensible polemic as a smoke screen, used by a highly trained and intelligent author who sought to establish, explicate, and support his own theological position by putting it on the lips of a great proto-orthodox leader of the faith, the famed martyr bishop Ignatius. By having Ignatius attack heresies thought to be from his own day, the author afforded himself the opportunity, in other places, to express his real theological agenda, by having Ignatius proclaim a theology that was, in fact, the forger's own.

Several subsidiary points need to be made before proceeding to a more detailed analysis. First, the author is clearly engaged, consciously, in the act of forgery, as is made clear both by all of his attempts at verisimilitude, some of which we will examine shortly, and by the fact that he altered in highly significant ways the authentic letters of Ignatius, in effect putting his own words on the pen of an author living more than a century and a half earlier. Moreover, the forger is not only concerned with theology and with conveying his particular Christological views under the authority of Ignatius. As is true of most authors, he has multiple interests.[57] These other interests include emphasizing the preeminence of the bishop, the ability of young men to serve as bishops, the importance of the church structure, the social relations of Christians, the relationship of church and state, and a large range of ethical issues, including opposition to rigorous asceticism.

Important Features of the Forgeries and Interpolations

I will not be able to provide an exhaustive examination of all the important features of the forger's work. A full analysis, however, is long overdue, and a full critical commentary on the Pseudo-Ignatians (including the interpolations) is a major desideratum in the field.

It is clear, in any event, that the author has gone out of his way to make his work believably Ignatian through the myriad verisimilitudes he provides. Thus, for example, we have the opening statement of the letter to the Tarsians: "From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, not that I am devoured by brute beasts … but by beasts in the shape of men … I therefore the prisoner of Christ, who am driven along by land and sea, exhort you" (ch. 1).[58] Or the opening statement of the letter to the Antiochians, "The Lord has rendered my bonds light and easy since I learnt that you are at peace"; or its postscript "I write this letter to you from Philippi"; or from a passage in medias res, "What I spoke to you while present I now write to you" (ch. 7). The letter to Hero, as might be expected, given its subject matter, is especially full of examples: "I hand over to thee the Church of Antioch…. The bishops Onesimus, Bitus, Damas, Polybius, and all they of Philippi (whence also I have written to thee), salute thee in Christ…" (chs. 7–8). "Salute Cassian, my host, and his most serious minded partner in life, and their very dear children…. Salute by name all the faithful in Christ that are at Laodicea. Do not neglect those at Tarsus…. I salute in the Lord

Maris, the bishop of Neopolis…. Salute thou also Mary my daughter …" (ch. 9). Especially profligate in this respect is the letter to Mary, where "Ignatius" waxes eloquent on the competing merits of writing as opposed to speaking face-to-face, and in a later section where he pretends to be under military guard (ch. 4), although here, evidently, he is imagined as being under house arrest in Antioch (whence he can fulfill her request) rather than en route to Rome. Verisimilitudes are not lacking to the additional comments of the interpolation, as seen, for example, in Ephesians 12, "I am the very insignificant Ignatius, who have thrown my lot with those exposed to danger."

All the verisimilitudes in the world cannot compensate for the author's occasional slips, however, as noted earlier, both in his delineation of false teachers who came after Ignatius' day in Tarsians 11 and in the list of minor church offices, some of which are otherwise unattested until the second half of the fourth century (subdeacons, readers, singers, doorkeepers, laborers, exorcists, confessors; Antiochenes 12).

In the interpolations there is a steady effort to expand upon what is already found in the authentic letters, not always in theologically, or at least christologically, interested ways. And so, for example, in Magnesians 5, instead of the Ignatian comment "there are two kinds of coins, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of these has its special character stamped upon it" we have

> Two different characters are found among men—the one true coin, the other spurious. The truly devout man is the right kind of coin, stamped by God Himself. The ungodly man, again, is false coin, unlawful, spurious, counterfeit, wrought not by God but by the devil. If anyone is truly religious, he is a man of God; but if he is irreligious, he is a man of the devil, made such, not by nature, but by his own choice. The unbelieving bear the image of the prince of wickedness. The believing possess the image of their Prince….

Such expansions dominate the interpolations. The author is especially extravagant in his use of Scripture, in particular the writings that by his time had constituted the New Testament. And so, for example, in Ephesians 9, where Ignatius himself may indeed allude to both 1 Peter and John 12, the forger provides nine explicit citations to provide scriptural backing for his

views, drawing from John 14, 16, 17; Psalm 119; 1 Peter 2, and Ephesians 1. Similar abundance can be found in Ephesians 10; Magnesians 8, 10, 12; Trallians 11; and Romans 8, 9.

In a number of instances the author tries to clear up difficult passages, often using more theologically loaded but still nuanced language. And so, in Magnesians 6, the Ignatian reference to deacons who are "entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the ages and has been manifest at the end" gets modified to language more acceptable to an author embroiled in later debates: "are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ. He, being begotten by the Father before the beginning of time, was God the Word, the only begotten son, and remains the same forever; for 'of his kingdom there shall be no end.'" Here, as we will see, is not just theology, but theological polemic, directed against those (of the fourth century) who denied that Christ was the Son before he became incarnate and those (same ones) who maintained that in fact the kingdom of Christ would indeed come to an end.

At other times the author's interests coincide roughly with those of Ignatius, who was thought to have not, perhaps, stressed a point with sufficient emphasis. Thus, on the question of the relationship of Christ and "Judaizers," Ignatius said in Magnesians 10: "It is outlandish to proclaim Jesus Christ and practice Judaism. For Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity." This gets changed to "it is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end. For where there is Christianity there cannot be Judaism. For Christ is one…."

The Theological Investments

The most obvious and striking feature of the Pseudo-Ignatians is their theological investments. Theology is prominent in the author's mind; the letters written to the churches (Tarsians, Antiochians, Philippians) all begin, immediately after the letter openings, with strong theological polemic. And so, for example, in the letter to the Tarsians, after extending an epistolary greeting, the author launches into his attack: "I have learned that certain of the ministers of Satan have wished to disturb you, some of them asserting that Jesus was born [only] in appearance…. Others, again, hold that He is a mere man, and others that this flesh is not to rise again …" (ch. 2). So too

the letter to the Antiochenes, "[Guard] against those heresies of the wicked one which have broken in upon us, to the deceiving and destruction of those that accept them …" (ch. 1).

Many of the interpolations as well involve true and false belief, and it becomes quite clear, especially here, that the author sees doctrine as a matter of life and death—or rather of eternal life and eternal damnation: the one who "sets at nought His doctrine shall go into hell" (Eph. 16); "If any man does not stand aloof from the preacher of falsehood, he shall be condemned to hell" (Philad. 3). It is hard to imagine anything more important, then, than true teaching.

This teaching, for the author, involves a clear affirmation of the Trinity, a doctrine that is inserted throughout the authentic letters of Ignatius. And so, for example, in Trallians 1, the phrase "By the will of God and Jesus Christ" becomes "by the will of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, with the cooperation of the Spirit"; in the preface to Romans the statement "is named from Christ, and from the Father" becomes "is named from Christ, and from the Father, and is possessed of the Spirit"; and in Philadelphians 4, the phrase "according to [the will of] God" becomes "there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of Truth."

In many other instances, the theological affirmations are presented in ostensibly polemical fashion. As noted, the polemics appear, on the surface, to be directed against older heresies presumably imagined as obtaining in the days of Ignatius. Despite the anachronisms, the polemical objects can all be assigned the second century, rather than the late fourth century. And so we find the warning of Tarsians 2:

> Certain ministers of Satan have wished to disturb you, some of them asserting that Jesus was born only in appearance, was crucified in appearance, and died in appearance; others that He is not the son of the Creator, and others that He is Himself God over all. Others, again, hold that He is a mere man, and others that this flesh is not to rise again.

Here then are attacks on docetism ("in appearance"), Gnosticism (or Marcionism; "not the son of the Creator"), Sabellianism ("God over all"), psilanthropism ("mere man"), and a condemnation of the flesh, such as found in the Gnostic works discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

A similar list applies to Antiochians 5, where some false teachers are said to declare "that there is but one God, only so as to take away the divinity of Christ." Others confess Christ, "yet not as the Son of the Maker of the world, but of some other unknown being, different from Him whom the Law and prophets have proclaimed." Others "[reject] the incarnation," and others declare "Christ to be a mere man." Here then one might think of Jewish Christianity (the unity of God without the divinity of Christ), Gnosticism, docetism, and adoptionism (or psilanthropism). A similar set of opponents is found in Hero 2, all of them second-century "deviations," but some of them post-Ignatian.

Such opposition is also found outside the congregational letters, especially in the exchange with Mary Cassobola, the predominant purpose of which is to support the possibility of young men serving as bishops, but in which theological affirmations nonetheless appear, in clear opposition to such groups as the adoptionists on the one hand and the Marcionites on the other (Christ preexisted but became human through the Virgin Mary, in fulfillment of the prophets, ch. 1). It occurs in the interpolations as well, as in Trallians 6:

> They alienate Christ from the Father, and the law from Christ. They also calumniate His being born of the Virgin; they are ashamed of His cross; they deny His passion; and they do not believe His resurrection. They introduce God as a Being unknown; they suppose Christ to be unbegotten; and as to the Spirit, they do not admit that He exists. Some of them say that the Son is a mere man, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but the same person, and that the creation is the work of God, not by Christ, but by some other strange power.

Even though, as we will see, some of this is coded language for theological conflicts of the author's own day, a good deal of it could be directed against second-century Marcionites, adoptionists, docetists, Gnostics, and

Sabellians. So too with an interpolation in Philadelphians 6, which explicitly attacks Simonians and Ebionites, and without naming them takes on the Marcionites, the Gnostics, the psilanthropists, and the docetists for good measure, not to mention those who are either excessively ascetic (calling "lawful wedlock, and the procreation of children, destruction and pollution" and deeming "certain kinds of food abominable") or heedlessly licentious (affirming that "unlawful unions are a good thing" and placing "the highest happiness in pleasure").

If we examine what the author affirms, and not merely what he rejects, a clearer picture of his place in the theological and christological debates of the fourth century begins to emerge. To start with, the forger stresses that there is one God, who alone is unbegotten, ὁ μόνος ἀγέννητος θεός (Hero 6; Eph. 7; cf. Antioch. 7; Magn. 7). It is only the heretics that teach that Christ too is ἀγέννητος (Philip. 7; Trall. 6). The one God is above all things (τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὁλῶν; Hero 7; Philip. 1), and he alone is almighty εἷς θεός ἐστιν ὁ παντοκράτωρ; Magn. 8.) This, as we will see, sets God the Father in contrast to his μονογενὴς υἱός,, who is mentioned alongside him, but is begotten, not unbegotten, and is not God over all things, and does the will of the Father (e.g., Philip. 1; Philad. 4; Eph. 3). Throughout his work, the forger tries to walk the tightrope that led to the fall of many a fourth-century theologian, by avoiding clearly heretical teachings from different ends of the spectrum. And so, from Philippians 2, we learn that for him there is "one God and Father, and not two or three," just as there are not "three Sons or three Paracletes." There is, instead, "one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete." But also, and equally important, there is not "one [person] having three names, nor … three [persons] who became incarnate." And so the author is determined to avoid a Sabellian view on the one hand, but some kind of tritheism on the other. For him, there may be one God, but there are "three" (what? beings?) who are "possessed of equal honour" (ἀλλ' εἰς τρεῖς ὁμοτίμους). The latter phrase, as we will see, has wreaked no little havoc among interpreters trying to make sense of the author's views (is ὁμοτίμους the same, or equivalent, to ὁμοούσιους? Or not?).

Some of the author's most emphatic teachings concern his views, specifically, of Christ. He has no difficulty calling Christ "God," although in most instances the term is anarthrous, and is, in the editing of the authentic Ignatians, made anarthrous. Thus Christ can be called

θεὸς και ἄνθρωπος (Philip. 5); he is the "flesh-bearing God" σαρκοφόρον θεόν (Smyrn. 5); or, with the rare use of the article, the God Word τὸν θεὸν λόγον (Smyrn. 1). It is only the false teachers who preach God but disaffirm/deny/destroy Christ's divinity καταγγέλλει θεὸν ἐπ᾽ ἀναιρέσει τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεότητος; Antioch. 5).

Christ is emphatically not God the Father or fully equal to him. Hero 6 is typical in making the differentiation:
ὁ μόνος ἀγέννητος θεὸς καὶ ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.. With some rhetorical flair, the author attacks Satan for claiming that Christ is "God over all, and the Almighty" (Philip. 7). In Antiochenes 14 he differentiates between the one who is unbegotten and the one who is begotten "before the ages" (ὁ ὢν μόνος ἀγέννητος διὰ τοῦ πρὸ αἰώνων γεγεννημένου).. The distinction between Father and Son is carefully kept, even where the Son is called "God." This can be seen, for example in the changes that the interpolator made to the famous hymnlike confession of Ephesians 7. No longer is Christ himself called, as in the authentic Ignatius, the "one physician." Now it is God "the Father and the Begetter of the only-begotten Son" who is "our physician"; at the same time "we have also as a physician τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν θεὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστόν.." As seen, Christ is still divine, but now, in this new version of the passage, Christ is no longer called ἀγέννητος; ; quite the contrary, only God is called ὁ μόνος ἀληθινὸς, the Lord of all, the father and begetter of the θεός, ὁ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἀπρόσιτος,. Christ, significantly, is indeed the "only-begotten Son and Word before time began"; he later became a human through the virgin Mary.

The distinction between Christ and God is seen as well in the interpolator's elimination from Ignatius's letters of the so-called exchange of predicates, so that, for example, the "blood of God" becomes the "blood of Christ" (Eph. Pref.). Similarly, the author typically changes phrases such as "Jesus Christ our God": καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, in Eph. 1, becomes κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν.. So too in the preface to Romans he shifts from ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν, to ἐν θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.. There are a few occasions, however, where the editor appears to be inconsistent, using the article in describing Christ's divine status, as in the Preface to Romans:
κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀγάπην Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν; and later in chapter 6: ἐπιτρέψατέ μοι μιμητὴν εἶναι πάθους Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ μου. One

cannot immediately rule out the possibility that the editor was occasionally inconsistent or less than rigorous.

What can be said with greater certainty, in any event, is that he goes out of his way to emphasize that even though the divine Christ may be worthy of equal honor to God (whatever that is taken to mean) he is decidedly subordinate to him as the Son of the Father. Christ's subordinate status is evident throughout the forged and interpolated letters. As examples, Christ is said to do all things "according to the will of the Father" (Eph. 3); he established all things "according to the will of the Father" (Eph. 18); Christ becomes "subject to" God ὃς καὶ μετὰ πάντων ὑποτάσσεται; Tars. 5); just as the church "depends on" Christ, Christ "depends on" God the Father (μακαρίζω τοὺς ἀνακεκραμένους αὐτῷ, ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ; Eph. 5); so too all in the church are to be obedient to the bishop as the bishop is to Christ and Christ is to the Father (Philad. 4). In Smyrneans 7 we are explicitly told that Jesus Christ "rejoiced in the superiority of the Father" (χαίρων τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπεροχῇ); in Smyrneans 9 Christ is subject to the Father just as those in the church are subject to their leaders and those lower in the church hierarchy are to those higher (οἱ λαϊκοὶ τοῖς διακόνοις ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, οἱ διάκονοι τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τῷ Χριστῷ, ὡς αὐτὸς τῷ πατρί).

Along with his concern to clarify—as best he could, we might assume—the relationship between Christ and God the Father, the forger was determined to understand the humanity of Christ, who, as we have seen, is described as an ἄνθρωπος.. The most striking feature of the author's view is that even though the Incarnate had a human body, he did not have a human soul. In its place was the Logos: "God the Word did dwell in a human body, being within it as the Word, even as the soul also is in the body, because it was God that inhabited it, and not a human soul" (Philad. 6).[59] Probably it was because of that that Christ, as a human, "could not be tempted" by the Devil in the wilderness (the author asks the Devil: πῶς πειράζεις τὸν ἀπείραστον; Philip. 11); and why he "lived a life of holiness without sin" (Smyrn. 1). After his life ended, it was the Word, which had previously indwelled him, that "raised up again His own temple on the third day" (Smyrn. 2).

The Author's Polemical Target

As repeatedly noted, it has proved remarkably difficult over the years for scholars to nail down the object of the author's polemic. On one hand, it is clear that he is opposed to all sorts of heterodoxy stemming from the second century—docetism, psilanthropism, Marcionism, Gnosticism, Sabellianism, and Ebionitism. It would be also fair to say, in general terms, that based on the parallels to the Job commentary, the author is almost certainly an "Arian" of some kind. But that term itself has fallen on hard times, for good reasons. Rowan Williams notes that it became more or less a term of disapprobation applied indiscriminately to anyone who did not subscribe to Nicene orthodoxy: "The anti-Nicene coalition did not see themselves as constituting a single 'Arian' body: it is the aim of works like Athanasius' *De synodis* to persuade them that this is effectively what they are, all tarred with the same brush."[60] Even such a die-hard dyohypostatic as Eusebius of Caesarea could in effect deny that he was Arian.[61] It is striking that in his theological writings *Contra marcellum* and *De ecclesiastica theologia*, Eusebius never uses either the term *Arian* or the name *Arius*; so too other harsh opponents of miahypostatics such as Eusebius of Emesa and Cyril of Jerusalem.[62]

Moreover—the point I stressed earlier—even though the author's Job Commentary comes out strongly for a neo-Arian position that appears close to those taken by an Aetius or Eunomius, this does not mean that this set of writings will as well. We know nothing about the life story of Julian of Antioch, whether he remained consistent in his Trinitarian views with the shifting of the doctrinal tides over the years, or whether he wrote these two works in close proximity to one another. It is hard to believe that a theologian such as Julian, who insisted on the absolute supremacy of God the Father, and the subordination of the Son, would be willing to say that the two were ὁμοτίμους. At the same time, that is the claim of Pseudo-Ignatius himself, even though he too stresses the superiority of the only unbegotten God and the subordination of his only begotten Son.

In any event, the counter arguments of Lightfoot that the author could as well be seen as a Nicene Christian fail to convince.[63] However one might decide to label the author positively, a number of his comments indeed appear to be coded statements of polemic, directed against a specific target. This target does not need to be identified with any person that we otherwise

have knowledge of, any more than the author Julian need be someone mentioned in our other surviving records. What is reasonably clear is that a number of the author's nuanced statements show that he is combating a hyper-monotheistic, virulently anti-Arian, strict miahypostatic view such as that embraced by, and often accorded to, Marcellus of Ancyra (whether Marcellus himself was the actual target or not). This view was commonly labeled Sabellian by its enemies, because of its insistence that there was only one hypostasis, God the Father, and that only the Word (not the Son) was preexistent with the Father.

According to Marcellus, the Word emerged from the Father for the purpose of creation and later, then, became flesh at the incarnation. It was when it took on flesh that the Word became the Son; indeed none of the traditional Christological titles, apart from Word, apply to the Preincarnate. At the end of all things, when the time is fulfilled, the Word will return into the Father, at which point the kingdom of the Christ will come to an end.[64]

The opponent of these views—Julian of Antioch, forger of the Pseudo-Ignatian letters—was some kind of "Arian,"[65] who is most clearly seen in what he attacks, either explicitly or with subtlety. It is hard to know why he does not take the hard neo-Arian views expressed in the Job Commentary. Is it because he is pretending to be Ignatius? Because his views are slightly different at this point of his life and authorship? Because he is more intent on opposing an aberrant view than setting forth the niceties of his own? In any event, his "Eusebian"-type opposition to a Marcellian miahypostatic view is relatively pronounced throughout this forged response in the name of Ignatius.[66]

And so, for example, Antiochenes 1 attacks those who "deny Christ under pretense of maintaining the unity of God"—the latter being one of the ultimate concerns of miahypostatic views. Philippians 4 insists that not only is there one God the Father, there is also one Son, God the Word. Repeatedly, throughout Julian, the forger's, writings, Christ is portrayed as a separate being from God. Christ, moreover, is the "Son" (not just the Word) "before the ages" (Antioch. 14); Christ (not just the Word) is begotten by the Father before the ages (Magn. 11); Christ is the Son of God before time (Polyc. 3). Magnesians 6 strongly asserts an anti-Marcellian position: Jesus Christ was begotten before the ages and was not only God the Word but the only begotten Son, and he "remains the same forever" and

"of his kingdom there will be no end"—the most strident and frequent position taken by opponents against Marcellus.

An even more direct assault on Marcellus is found in the edited version of Magnesians 8, as long ago recognized by Lightfoot. The authentic letter spoke of "Jesus Christ His Son, who is his word proceeding from silence."[67] The interpolator significantly altered the passage with important theological result, so that now it reads,

διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν αὐτοῦ λόγος, οὐ ῥητός, ἀλλ' οὐσιώδης· οὐ γάρ ἐστιν λαλιᾶς ἐνάρθρου φώνημα, ἀλλ' ἐνεργείας θεϊκῆς οὐσία γεννητή:

> through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Word, not a literal utterance but having a real existence; for he is not a speaking of an articulate utterance [meaning that he is not just words that can be aurally sensed] but is a being begotten of divine power [that is, he has a real existence as an ousia, but is begotten as such by God].[68]

Lightfoot argues that this statement opposed the Marcellian view that Christ did not have a separate ousia from the Father but was an energy emitted by the Father for the purposes of creation and redemption, who then was absorbed back into the Father when these tasks were completed.[69] Moreover, it stresses, contrary to Marcellus, that the Preincarnate was not Word in name only, a Word that was inside the Father until spoken and not the Son (until the incarnation).[70]

For this author not only is the divine Christ a distinctive being, begotten before the ages, he is subordinate to God, contrary to the views of Marcellus and others more or less in the Athanasian camp or to the left of it. Hence the stress we have seen already: Christ does the will of the Father, he does nothing apart from the Father (Magn. 7); he is subject to the Father, dependent on the Father, obedient to the Father (Eph. 5; Philad. 4; Smyrn. 7, 9). This is a subordinationist Christology. It makes sense, then, that the author portrays his opponent(s) in contrary, Sabellian terms. Thus, as we have seen Satan (the author of the heresy held by the opponent) is attacked in Philippians 7 for maintaining that Christ himself is God over all. So too Marcellus and his followers were often accused of being Sabellian, since they were so miahypostatic that they (seemed to have) denied the Son a

separate existence. It bears noting that in his *De ecclesiastica theologia* Eusebius accused Marcellus of being Sabellian on forty occasions; moreover, a number of later anti-miahypostatic tractates—including Pseudo-Athanasius' *Fourth Oration against the Arians* and Basil of Caesarea's *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos*—attacked Marcellus and his followers under the thinly disguised figure of Sabellius.[71] Finally, it should be noted that Eusebius explicitly maligned Marcellus for his view that Christ had a specifically human soul (*De eccl. theol*. 1.20.43, 45); the author of the Pseudo-Ignatians is emphatic that the incarnate Christ had a human body and the divine Logos in the place of a human soul, a view that has been wrongly read as Apollinarian, but is in any event clearly anti-Marcellian.[72]

Some Remaining Ambiguities

It would not be prudent to claim to have ascertained the precise theological position of the author of the Pseudo-Ignatian corpus, when so many stalwarts in the field have failed. What is relatively clear is that the author Julian has here used the proto-orthodox martyr-bishop Ignatius to oppose an Über-Nicene view such as found in Marcellus and those like him, who stressed the complete unity of God at the expense (it was thought) of the separate existence of the Son. This miahypo-static position is roundly attacked in the polemics of the corpus through its emphasis on the preexistence of the Son (not just the Word), his separate existence from God, and especially his subordination to God. All of this could simply be called Origenist, but that does not get us very far, as so many theological views of the fourth century could trace their lineage—had they wanted to do so—to the great Alexandrian.

Even though Julian himself appears to have been neo-Arian in his Commentary on Job, the views in the Ignatian forgeries (and interpolations) are more muted, and ambiguities remain. When the author stresses that there is only one God, not two or three (Philip. 2), that may simply be a defense against the charge of ditheism or tritheism, but it could also be an attack on those who, like Origen, had no qualms about calling Christ a "second God"—a view acceptable as well to a range of Arians. The "Eusebian" dyohypostatic view stressed that although there were two hypostases, they were not equal; Eusebius, in fact, makes the emphatic

declaration that δύο ὑποστάσεις τιθέντα. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἰσοτίμους αὐτὰς ὁριζόμεθα (*De eccl. theol*. 2.7.3). That seems difficult to reconcile with the claim of Pseudo-Ignatius that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are, precisely, εἰς τρεῖς ὁμοτίμους (Philip. 2). Are the three ὁμοτίμους but not ἰσοτίμους? Moreover, when the author claims that the opponents "alienate Christ from the Father" (Trall. 6) is that an attack on neo-Arians? And does the claim that Christ is "unchangeable in nature" (Philip. 5) stand counter to a neo-Arian view, as Perler maintains?[73]

In sum, while a good deal remains ambiguous, several points seem clear. In view of linguistic considerations, the author of the Pseudo-Ignatians appears to be Julian of Antioch, who also produced the Apostolic Constitutions and the Commentary on Job. In the latter he takes a strong neo-Arian stand. In the Pseudo-Ignatians, for one reason or another (written for a different purpose? At a different time in his life, when his views were somewhat altered?) the line he takes is somewhat more moderate, comparable to a traditional Eusebian dyohypostatic perspective. But there is little doubt about his principal theological opponent—whether a real figure or a person or group imagined for the occasion. He attacks in particular an extreme Nicene perspective that emphasized the unity of God, the one hypostasis, at the expense, in the author's opinion, of the individual existence of Christ and his subordination to the Father.

Other Emphases of the Author

Throughout this study I have stressed that forgeries—like other literary works—need to be seen as multifunctional, and this is certainly the case with the Pseudo-Ignatians. The author was not concerned simply to attack false theological teachings. He had a wide range of interests, as is evident from even a casual perusal of his work. Among other things he devoted a considerable amount of effort to expanding the paranetic sections of the authentic Ignatian letters (see e.g., Philad. 4) and in providing paranesis of his own (e.g., Antioch. 9–10). In that regard he was interested in the social arrangements of the Christians in their family lives (the Haustafeln in the chapters just mentioned); in ethical instructions against crimes such as magic, pederasty, and murder (Antioch. 11); and against fanatically rigorous asceticism (Hero 1). He was particularly concerned to develop Ignatius' own stress on the church hierarchy (e.g., Eph. 5). The bishop is to be

followed as the head of the church (Hero 3, Tars. 8, Trall. 7, Smyrn. 9, and lots of other places). The author was especially keen to stress—in an elaboration on a theme of the Pastoral epistles, as N. Brox has recognized[74]—the validity of young bishops (Magn. 3 and both letters in the correspondence with Mary).

In addition, he had other polemical targets, not just the dubious theologians he saw as the primary threat. In particular, he was concerned with Jews and/or Judaizers who, in this case, were not necessarily ciphers for his overly emphatic miahypostatic opponents.[75] And so, he explicitly attacks the "Christ killing Jews" (Magn. 11; Philad. 6) and indicates that Jews both do battle with God and "killed the Lord" (Trall. 11). Christ stands over against "the Jews," his enemies: "The Word raised up again His own temple on the third day, when it had been destroyed by the Jews fighting against Christ." For him, Judaism no longer served a useful (or any) function, and had legitimately passed away: "It is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end" (Magn. 10). For that reason, Jewish festivals were no longer to be kept: "Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness" (Magn. 9). In fact, anyone who keeps Sabbath "is a Christ killer" (Philip. 13); so too is anyone who celebrates the Passover with the Jews. This final attack may be directed against Quartodecimans; but given the propensity of some Christians in some places to celebrate Jewish holidays with Jews—famously acknowledged and attacked by other stalwart fourth-century proponents of Christian orthodoxy such as John Chrysostom[76]—the author may indeed have in mind otherwise orthodox Christians celebrating real festivals with real Jewish friends and neighbors.

1. See pp. 362–66.

2. F. C. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity* (London: John Murray, 1904), ch. 1.

3. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ch. 1.

4. Judah Segal, *Edessa, the "Blessed City"* pp. 68–69.

5. See e.g., J. J. Gunther, "The Meaning and Origin of the Name, 'Judas Thomas,'" *Mus* 93 (1980): 113–48. On the whole question, see Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in Attridge and Hata, eds., *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, pp. 212–34; and Alexander Mirkovic,

Prelude to Constantine. Mirkovic's concern, however, is not with the origin of the legend but with its function in the early centuries of circulation.

6. Most thoroughly in H. J. W. Drijvers, "Addai und Mani: Christentum und Manichäismus im dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien," *OrChrAn* 221 (1983): 171–85; recapitulated in "The Abgar Legend," in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1.492–99. See also "Facts and Problems in Early Syriac Speaking Christianity," *SecCent* 2 (1982): 157–75.

7. "Die Abgar-Sage ist wahrscheinlich am Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts in Edessa entstanden als eine Propagandaschrift der damaligen Orthodoxie"; "Addai und Mani," p. 172.

8. See pp. 364–66.

9. Translation from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*. In the later *Doctrina Addai*, Jesus' reply is delivered orally rather than in writing. It is usually thought that this is a change from the older version of the story, influenced by the view that Jesus was known not to have written anything (so Augustine, *Contra Faust*. 28.4; Jerome, *In Ezek*. 44. 29; Gelasian Decree 5.8.1.2).

0. Quotation from M. 556, I, ed. F. W. K. Muller, *APAW* (1904): 87, as cited by Drijvers, "Facts and Problems," p. 163, n. 24.

1. "Es stellt sich also heraus, dass der Antwortbrief Jesu an Abgar eine pointierte Version des Para-kletspruches ist, die vielleicht gegen den manichäischen Ansprüchen und der manichäischen Mission gemeint ist"; "Addai und Mani," p. 180.

2. Drijvers also suggests that the allusion to John 20:29 at the outset may have been picked up from the Manichaean literature, as the Manichaeans may have used it to explain why the eyewitnesses got it wrong and only the later Mani got it right; "Addai und Mani," p. 181.

3. Ibid., p. 181.

4. Drijvers' view that it was the last line of the letter ("your city will be blessed and the enemy will no longer prevail over it") that led to a separate transmission history of the letters, apart from the stories, fails to convince. Why would the line not, then, be found in Eusebius, if he knew both the letters and the legend? It is easier to believe that the correspondence originally had a transmission history of its own and that the final line was added in some witnesses but not others.

5. "Abgar Legend," p. 495. Emphasis his.

6. “Facts and Problems,” p. 161.
7. Interestingly, in the Manichaean legend, Mani’s “heavenly twin clothes him with miraculous healing power and charges him to proclaim the message of the truth.” This is, in the Addai Legend, “exactly the same task for which Judas Thomas sends Addai to Edessa.” It is, then, a later feature of the legend, as the letters originally indicated that it would be Jesus who sent an apostle, not his twin. Moreover, in the *Doctrina Addai*, the portrait of Jesus painted by Hanan appears to stand in the place of the venerated portrait of Mani. “Facts and Problems,” p. 165–66.
8. “The Abgar Legend,” p. 496.
9. On the problem presented now by the term *Arian*, see below, pp. 474–75.
0. Charles Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 192.
1. *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2006), p. 15.
2. Prologue to the *Recognitions*; translation of Thomas Smith in *ANF*, vol. 8.
3. *Knowledge and Religious Authority*, p. 28.
4. Ibid., pp. 206–7.
5. See the fascinating historical survey of J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp* (London: Macmillan, 1889–90, reprinted Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1989); part 2, vol. 1, *Ignatius and Polycarp*; pp. 237–46.
6. *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 235.
7. Quoted in ibid., p. 237.
8. For the following two paragraphs I depend on my discussion in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1. 210–11.
9. *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae* (Oxford: Lichfield, 1644).
0. *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii martyris* (Amsterdam: Blaev, 1646).
1. *Acta primorum martyrum sincere et selecta* (Paris: Muget, 1689).
2. William Cureton, *The Ancient Syriac Version of Saint Ignatius* (London: Rivington, 1845).
3. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*. Theodore Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* (Gotha: Perthes, 1873).
4. Weijenborg, *Les lettres d'Ignace*; Joly, *Dossier;* Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters;* Hübner, “Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung”; Thomas

Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos*.

5. See further p. 6, n. 7.

6. Lightfoot, p. 248; much of Zahn's argument is recapitulated in Arnold Amelungk, "Untersuchung über Pseudo-Ignatius," *ZWT* 42 (1899): 508–81.

7. "eigentlich ein Plagiat von dem [Brief] an Polycarp." Amelungk, "Untersuchung," p. 553.

8. Jack W. Hannah, "The Setting of the Ignatian Long Recension," *JBL* 79 (1960): 222.

9. Milton P. Brown, "Notes on the Language and Style of Pseudo-Ignatius," *JBL* 83 (1964): 146–52.

0. Translations are taken from A. Cleveland Coxe in *ANF*.

1. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 258.

2. See, for example, A. Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*, pp. 241–68; and C. H. Turner, "Notes on the Apostolic Constitutions I–III," *JTS* 16 (1914–15): 54–61, 523–38; 31 (1930): 128–41.

3. Dieter Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar*.

4. "Un commentaire grec arien sur Job," *RHE* 20 (1924): 38–65.

5. For early views, and an explicit discussion and refutation of Funk's claim that the author was Apollinarian, see Amelungk, "Untersuchungen." For Eusebius of Emesa: Othmar Perler, "Pseudo-Ignatius und Eusebius von Emesa," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958), 73–82; Evagrius Ponticus (completely un-convincingly): Reinoud Weijenborg," Is Evagrius Ponticus the Author of the Longer Recension of the Ignatian Letters?" *Anton* 44 (1969): 339–47; Euzoius or associate: James D. Smith, III, "Reflections on Euzoius in Alexandria and Antioch," *StPatr* 36 (2001): 514–20.

6. *Hiobkommentar*, xli.

7. On the problems involved with using the term *Arian*, see esp. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Thinking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 2–4, 13–14. See further pp. 474–75 below.

8. *Hiobkommentar*, xlii–xlviii.

9. Ibid., xlix.

0. "Die einzige mögliche Erklärung für die sachlichen und sprachlich-stilistischen Parallelen zwischen allen drei Werken ist die Identität ihres Autors." Ibid., lii.

1. Translation mine, based on the Greek text in Hagedorn, *Hiobkommentar*, pp. 245–46.
2. His argument: Julian uses the Lucianic revision of the Septuagint, he cites the exegesis of Lucian of Antioch, he discusses alternative interpretations of "the Syrians," and Antioch was a stronghold of Arianism.
3. See, e.g., Joseph Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1999), ch. 4.
4. This is why it is important to look at a range of issues, not simply theological content, when evaluating the authorial claims of such works as the Pastoral epistles or Colossians and Ephesians.
5. On the problems of using terms connected with "Arian," see pp. 474–75.
6. See, e.g., Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, pp. 210–40.
7. See, for example, Norbert Brox, "Pseudo-Paulus und Pseudo-Ignatius: einige Topoi altchristlicher Pseudepigraphie," *VC* 30 (1976): 181–88, who deals with a very limited aspect of the problem posed by the Pseudo-Ignatians, arguing that the author modeled his work on Pastorals, especially (though somewhat obviously) in his correspondence with Mary.
8. All quotations of the long recension of Ignatius are taken from Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *ANF*, vol. 1.
9. This was obviously a key passage for Funk's identification of the author as an Apollinarian; see, though, note 65 below.
0. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 166. See also note 47 above.
1. See especially Lienhard, *Marcellus*, p. 108.
2. Ibid., p. 194. It is interesting to consider the First Creed of the Dedication at the Council of Antioch, whose "Arian" bishops rejected the label Arian: "We have not been followers of Arius. For how could we, as bishops, follow a presbyter? Nor did we receive any other faith except the one handed down from the beginning. We ourselves were the examiners and testers of his [Arius's] faith. We admitted him; we did not follow him." Quoted in ibid., p. 168.
3. For example, Lightfoot argues that the author speaks of the Son as "begotten before the Ages." But he admits that most Arians would have no trouble saying that as well. He indicates that the author condemns those who see Christ as a mere man as well as those who deny that he is God;

that too could be and was part of Arian polemic. And he points out that the author calls Christ "God"—but so too do Arians. Lightfoot also maintains that Arians would not consider Christ "unchangeable" by nature (on the basis of a passage in the Thalia); but Perler has argued that whereas extreme Arians may not have made the claim, those like Eusebius of Caesarea easily could have done so (Othmar Perler, "Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochian: Frage der Echtheit—neue, arabische Übersetzung," *FZPhTh* 18, 1971, 381–96). At the end of the day, the author simply uses too much "Arian" language to be dismissed.

4. For the fullest and best synthesis of Marcellus's life and theology, see Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum;* in addition see Ayres, *Niceae*, pp. 62–69.

5. That he was not a Nicene of Apollinarian leanings was shown long ago, especially in Amelungk's refutation of Funk, "Untersuchung"; his conclusion stands close to the position staked out here; pp. 521–22. What he does not realize is that the subtle views are set up by the smokescreen. See also Light-foot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 1, pp. 254–61.

6. Others who have seen the author as an Arian of a more-or-less-Eusebian mode include Perler, "Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochian," pp. 381–96, with Perler earlier making a more specific proposal, in "Pseudo-Ignatius"; and K. J. Woollcombe, "The Doctrinal Connexions of the Pseudo-Ignatian Letters," *StPatr* 6 (1962): 269–73. Amelungk has helpfully deduced a large number of parallels between the Pseudo-Ignatians and the Ekthesis makrostichos in particular, possibly a source for Julian's work; see the tabular results in Amelungk, "Untersuchungen," pp. 573–81.

7. On the famous textual problem, where scribes nervous about the claim being taken in a Gnostic way added a negative, so that now the Word does *not* come forth from "Sige," see Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 2, pp. 126–28.

8. Translation mine.

9. *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 1, p. 268.

0. On Marcellus's views, see Lienhard *Marcellus*, p. 218.

1. See ibid., pp. 210–40.

2. Apollinarius saw the Logos as taking the place of the νοῦς or πνεῦμα, not the ψύχη, though the matter came to be complicated in later Apollinarians. Other aspects of the author's teaching, however, seem to distance him from

Apollinarius. See further Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 1, pp. 271–73, and note 65 above.

3. "Pseudo-Ignatius und Eusebius von Emesa," pp. 80–81.
4. N. Brox, "Pseudo-Paulus."
5. On the use of "the Jew" as a convenient label against fellow Christians in fourth-century controversies, see, e.g., Christine Shepardson, *Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy: Ephrem's Hymns in Fourth Century Syria* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).
6. See for example Robert Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Fourth Century* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Apologetic Forgeries

In the preceding chapters I have focused on Christian forgeries that attack views thought to be problematic or dangerous—the standard province of polemics. The obverse of the battle coin is apologia, the defense put up against the attacks of others.[1] Early Christian forgeries were used in the intellectual defense of the faith against non-Christian opponents, and it is that apologetic function of forged writings that I will consider in this chapter.[2]

Several of the forgeries I have already discussed may well have functioned, in one sense or another, apologetically.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Acts of the Apostles, a non-pseudepigraphic forgery that strives, among other things, to champion Paul, his message, and his mission, has often been read as an apology of sorts, not just for Paul (and Jesus) but for the Christian movement as a whole.[3] To some extent, though not completely, this apologetic thrust hinges on the identification of Theophilus. If he is thought of as a Roman official of some kind—whether an actual figure or one dreamt up for the occasion—it would make sense that the history of the Christian church that follows would be oriented toward convincing him that the movement comes from God, that there is nothing illegal or immoral about it, that its success is evidence of its truth claims, and that any social conflict that has erupted with its appearance is due not to rabble-rousers among the Christians but to the recalcitrant Jews who have rejected not only God but also his messiah and the people who follow him. This bilateral approach that sets its apologetic sights on both pagans, to whom apology is made, and Jews, who are faulted and condemned in the process, became a regular feature of the early Christian apologetic literature, for reasons that are not hard to fathom. For Christian thinkers intent on establishing the legitimacy of the religion as ancient only one real option was available: to present the Christian faith as the "true" form of

Judaism, a religion that could be traced as far back as Moses—who lived four centuries before the pagan Homer—and beyond him all the way to Abraham. In a world that respected antiquity and suspected novelty, Judaism was a religion with venerable roots, and Christians needed to claim them as their own. It was a claim hard to sustain, given the thriving communities of non-Christian Jews, far outnumbering the followers of Jesus, legitimately able to claim themselves to be "true" Jews. They, unlike most Christians, actually followed Jewish laws and traditions. And if they were the Jews, what were the Christians but a set of interlopers who tried to usurp Israel's rightful place as the people of the one Creator God? As a matter of survival, then, Christian apologists had to attack contemporary Judaism as an aberrant form of the faith that descended from Abraham and Moses.

This is one of the factors that led to the early animosities between Jews and Christians, and it played itself out narratively not just in the minds of Christians but also on the written page, in a book such as Acts which portrays the Jews in a negative light, blaming them for the Christians' woes and portraying them as troublemakers who have refused to accept the true prophet and messiah sent from their own God. The persecution of Christians in this book does not usually originate with Roman mobs or officials incensed at the claims made for Jesus. It almost always originates with Jews, who have rejected their own messiah.[4] Thus the apologetic function of the book depends in part on its castigation of Jews and the true religion that they belligerently refuse to embrace.

And so the book absolves Christians—especially the apostles, and in particular Paul—of any wrongdoing. The apologetic *Tendenz* is seen especially in the speeches delivered to pagan officials in the book, speeches that dominate the final quarter of the narrative in the episodes of Paul on trial. These speeches are not historical recollections; they are apologetic models for Christian readers who also needed to defend themselves against charges that the author considered unfair and unjustified. The Christians have done nothing to rouse the ire of the state; they are simply following the true understanding of the Jewish faith made available now with the coming of the messiah. Any social unrest that accompanies the movement originates with the wicked machinations of unbelieving Jews.

We will see this correlation of antagonism to Jews and apology to gentiles in such works as the Acts of Pilate, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and

the Sibylline Oracles. In the case of the Acts of the Apostles, the intertwined themes are connected to the identity of the pseudonymous author. He is not simply someone who is basing his work on hearsay. He has done substantial research into the matter (Luke 1:1–4), and more than that, he was personally there to see how the principal figure in his narrative —the apostle Paul himself—engendered unwarranted hatred by the Jews, leading to his arrest and trials, where he delivered his apologetic addresses. The alleged author, then, is well situated to show that the followers of Jesus are no threat to the social order.

FIRST PETER

Another forgery that is both closely connected with Paul and related to issues of apologia is the letter of 1 Peter.[5] Unlike Acts, 1 Peter is not principally framed to convey an apologetic message; it instead gives instructions for Christians confronted with animosity and opposition, urging them to behave in ways that reveal their innocence in the face of charges—unofficial, in this case—brought against them: "Be prepared at all times to provide an apologia to everyone who asks you for a word concerning the hope that is in you" (3:15). As noted earlier, the book is especially obsessed with the issue of Christian persecution and suffering. The author is particularly concerned that Christians suffer only for doing what is right, not what is wrong (3:17). Suffering "as a Christian" is to be expected, since Christ himself had to suffer (3:18). But his followers should suffer for their faith, not because they have done anything to incur legitimate animosity: "For what credit is there if you sin and suffer for it, but endure it? But if you do what is good and suffer, and endure it, this is acceptable to God" (2:20). Christians are to lead moral and upright lives, in no small measure because doing so may pay the ultimate apologetic reward of leading others to join the faith: "Abstain from the fleshly passions which do battle against your soul; keep your conduct good among the gentiles, so that when they malign you as evil doers they may see your good works and give glory to God on the day of visitation" (2:11–12).

The Christians' behavior should not merely be acceptable to outsiders, it should be exemplary. They should "no longer live according to human passions but according to the will of God" (4:2). In this they display a

newness of life that should attract the right kind of attention:

> The time that is already past is sufficient to fulfill the will of the gentiles, participating in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, drinking parties, and lawless idolatries. They are surprised when you do not run around with them in the same wild profligacy, and they blaspheme—but they will render an account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (4:3–4).

In addition, Christians are to subject themselves to every civil authority (2:13–14), "for it is the will of God that by doing good you might silence the ignorance of the foolish" (2:15). On the home front, Christians are to follow established lines of authority. Slaves are to obey masters (2:18) and women are to be submissive to husbands, "so that if some are disobedient to the word, they might be gained through the behavior of their wives without them saying a word" (3:1). In short, believers are to be model citizens, slaves, and spouses; they should not break the law or acceptable moral codes (4:15); but if they suffer "as a Christian" that is all to the good, as in the long run it may have a positive effect, for both sufferer and oppressor (3:16–17).

This exhortation to speak and live apologetically is given by one of early Christianity's ultimate authorities, the apostle Peter, "witness to Christ's sufferings," who himself, of course, was reputed to have suffered the ultimate penalty, in having been martyred under Nero in Rome. The letter, though, was not actually written by Peter from beyond the grave, but by a forger who was intent on using Peter's name to provide authorization for the message he needed to deliver.

THE ACTS OF PILATE

As a final example of a previously examined forgery that functioned apologetically, we should consider anew the fourth-century Acts of Pilate.[6] As already indicated, the genesis of the book has generated considerable interest among scholars, in no small measure because of the intriguing circumstance mentioned by Eusebius, that earlier in the fourth century, during the reign of Maximin Daia, a pagan version of an "Acts of Pilate"

appeared and made an enormous splash among readers throughout the Empire.

Although this pagan Acts of Pilate does not survive, the Christian version does. In this imaginative account, as we have seen, rather than condemning Jesus justly for warrantable crimes, Pilate finds Jesus completely innocent of all charges. It is only the recalcitrant Jews who force his hand. Pilate himself is convinced that Jesus is the true King. So too is everyone else in the narrative, apart from the Jewish antagonists. Even the standards bearing the image of Caesar bow down, of their own accord, before him. Caesar himself, then, recognizes not just Jesus' complete innocence but his divine royalty.

This in itself is an apologetic motif, but in many ways it is the very existence of this Christian version of an Acts of Pilate that functions as an apology. This appears to be a case of counterforgery, a forged Christian Acts countering an earlier forged pagan Acts. To that extent, the book is the apologetic equivalent to the polemical letter of the Laodiceans, whose very existence shows that the Marcionite forgery could not really be by Paul. With the Acts of Pilate, the Christian edition discredits and refutes the pagan account simply by giving the "true" version of the story. To do so it had no need to refer explicitly to the earlier work. Its appearance and dissemination themselves corrected the errant portrayal of the older forgery.

In addition to these forgeries that we have already considered under other rubrics, there are several whose primary function may well be considered apologetic, including one that was, in many ways, more historically and culturally significant than many of the books that eventually became Scripture, the Protevangelium Jacobi.

THE PROTEVANGELIUM JACOBI

The title, Protevangelium Jacobi, is not original or even ancient. It comes from the first publication of the book by G. Postel in 1552, *Protevangelion sive de natalibus Jesu Christi et ipsius Matris virginis Mariae, sermo historicus divi Jacobi minoris*.[7] The title is appropriate to the book's contents, as the narrative relates events leading up to and immediately following the birth of Jesus, especially those involving Mary: her own miraculous birth, upbringing, young life, and engagement to Joseph. In

addition, the account narrates, as a kind of Christian midrash on the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke,[8] the circumstances of Jesus' birth, Mary's continued virginity (demonstrated famously by a midwife's postpartum inspection), and the opposition to the Christ child by King Herod, leading to the miraculous protection of John the Baptist and his mother, while his father, Zacharias, the high priest of the Jews, is murdered in the Temple. The book is allegedly written by "James," by whom is certainly meant the brother of Jesus, or for this account, his stepbrother, the son of Joseph from a previous marriage.

The account is usually dated to the second century, for reasons we will see below, and became particularly popular in eastern Christendom.[9] It was not unknown in the West: there are still fragments of a Latin version and, more important, it was taken over by the widely read Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, which popularized many of its stories. But for the most part the Protevangelium was not transmitted in the West because its portrayal of Jesus' brothers as sons of Joseph from a previous marriage was roundly condemned by no less an authority than Jerome, in whose forcefully stated view Jesus' alleged brothers were in fact his cousins.[10] This interpretation was closely tied to Jerome's ascetic agenda; for him, not only was Mary a perpetual virgin, but so too was Joseph, the earthly father of the Lord. The Protevangelium was explicitly condemned in 405 CE by Pope Innocent I[11] and eventually in the sixth-century Gelasian Decree.

The earliest reference that is virtually certain comes in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (on Matt. 13:55), where he claims that the view that James was the son of Joseph from a previous marriage is taught either in the Gospel of Peter or the Book of James, the latter of which, he says, stresses the ongoing virginity of Mary. As this is a key theme of the Protevangelium, there is little doubt that Origen is referring to our text. More questionable are possible references in Clement of Alexandria, who knows the story of Mary's postpartum inspection by a midwife, but does not indicate the source of his knowledge *(Strom. 7*. 16. 93), and earlier in Justin, who knows the tradition that Jesus was born in a cave outside Bethlehem, but does not refer to the Protevangelium itself (*Dial*. 78).

Whenever the Protevangelium achieved its final form (if one can speak of a "final" form for a textual tradition as malleable as this one),[12] the text as it has come down to us gives clear signs of being based on yet earlier

sources available to the pseudonymous author. Not only is chapter 18 narrated in the first person (Joseph describing how "time stood still" when the son of God came into the world), so too is the postscript: "I James, the one who has written this account" (ch. 25). Obviously, the first person of chapter 25 is different from the first person of chapter 18; the two accounts almost certainly come from different sources, or at least from one later redaction of another source. Harnack made the influential argument that there are three major sources that have been incorporated into the longer account: (1) a kind of biography of Mary in chapters 1–17, beginning with the circumstances of her miraculous birth to the wealthy Jerusalemite Joachim and his hitherto barren wife, Anna, and through her holy and protected infancy, to her upbringing in the Jerusalem Temple, where she is daily fed by an angel, through her engagement to the elderly Joseph, and then her virginal conception; (2) an account of Joseph and the birth of Jesus in chapters 18–20, including the trip to Bethlehem, the firsthand account of Joseph's vision of time standing still, and the narrative of the postpartum inspection of Mary, which showed her to be a virgin even after giving birth; and (3) an account of the death of Zacharaias, the father of John the Baptist, in the wake of Herod's wrath, in chapters 22–24.[13]

Other scholars, such as de Strycker, have argued for an original unity of the text, largely on the grounds of literary style and vocabulary.[14] What is clear, in any event, is that the subject matter does shift in the final chapters of the book, where Mary, the key figure of the narrative as a whole, disappears from sight, and the family of John the Baptist assumes center stage. Even if this latter account was "original" to the text, it probably comes from a different oral or written source, as did the vision of Joseph in chapter 18.

Whatever his sources, it is not difficult to reconstruct some of the driving forces that led the pseudonymous author to generate his account. The canonical Gospels are notoriously silent about key issues and events involving the time up to and including Jesus' appearance into the world. This Gospel tries to fill in some of the gaps. It would be a mistake, however, to see the Protevangelium driven by biographical concerns pure and simple, or even by the impulse to provide an encomium on Mary, as such scholars as Hock have maintained.[15] The narrative does indeed function in both of these ways. But it also functions apologetically, to answer charges leveled against Jesus by non-Christian authors who were

opposed both to him and to the religion founded in his name. It answers these charges pseudonymously, in a forgery allegedly written by Jesus' own (step)brother, James, who would obviously be well positioned to know the family secrets about events leading up to Jesus' appearance in the world.

The Pseudepigraphic Framework

There can be little doubt that by using the pseudonym "James" the author meant for his readers to identify him as Jesus' brother, the leader of the church in the Jewish capital, James of Jerusalem. Not only does he not identify himself further, so that readers naturally assume it must be "that" James, but at the end he associates himself with the holy city (cf. Gal. 2:9):

> But I James, the one who has written this account in Jerusalem, hid myself away in the wilderness when there was a disturbance at the death of Herod, until the disturbance in Jerusalem came to an end. There I glorified God, the Master, who gave me the wisdom to write this account. (ch. 25)[16]

This Herod, then, is "Herod the Great," known to be violently opposed to the family of Joseph (Matthew 2). But it is also possible that the author is making an implausible intertextual connection, or that he is himself somewhat confused about the facts of biblical history, by referring to the association of "James" and "Herod" from Acts 12:1–2. In the latter episode, it is another James (the son of Zebedee) who is persecuted, and by one of the other Herods (Antipas), who had him executed. According to the Protevangelium, James escaped the persecution, which in any event happened after Herod's death; but possibly the author meant the passage to provide a foreshadowing of persecution yet to come (another James, another Herod). History knows of no connection between James of Jerusalem and Herod Antipas, but one should not object that this text, of all texts, could be expected to get the historical record straight.

In any event, in the Protevangelium, Joseph is said to have grown sons already when he is chosen to be Mary's husband (9.2); of these one is named Samuel (17.2). The James writing the book is obviously another son, and so an impeccable authority for events involving his "brother."[17] As H.

Smid points out, the fact that he claims to be writing after the persecution of Herod had died down is meant to indicate that the book was produced very soon after the events described, while Jesus was still a child.

The Apologetic Character of the Text

The Protevangelium is widely thought to have as one of its purposes the "defense" of Mary against the attacks of pagan critics such as Celsus.[18] Mary Foskett claims that this view is held by the "majority of interpreters," although she herself prefers Hock's position that the book is meant as an encomium, not an apologia.[19] It is not clear, however, that these generic options are to be imagined as mutually exclusive. Encomia, among other things, can perform apologetic functions, and no one thinks that the narrative is in the *form* of an apologia.

The narrative may not be a direct response to Celsus' Ἀληθὴς Λόγος, but if not, it is a response to an attack on Mary and Jesus that was remarkably close to it in tenor and content. Celsus' attempt to disprove that Jesus could be a true son of God is worth quoting at length. The charges are placed on the lips of an antagonistic Jew:

> After this he represents the Jew as having a conversation with Jesus himself and refuting him on many charges as he thinks: first because he fabricated the story of his birth from a virgin; and he reproaches him because he came from a Jewish village and from a poor country woman who earned her living by spinning. He says that she was driven out by her husband, who was a carpenter by trade, as she was convicted of adultery. Then he says that after she had been driven out by her husband and while she was wandering about in a disgraceful way she secretly gave birth to Jesus. And he says that because he was poor he hired himself out as a workman in Egypt, and there tried his hand at certain magical powers on which the Egyptians pride themselves. (1.28)
>
> … The mother of Jesus is described as having been turned out by the carpenter who was betrothed to her, as she had been convicted of adultery and had a child by a certain soldier named Panthera. (1.32)[20]

Then, in an attempt to attack the idea that Jesus was conceived by the Spirit of God:

> Then was the mother of Jesus beautiful? And because she was beautiful did God have sexual intercourse with her, although by nature He cannot love a corruptible body? It is not likely that God would have fallen in love with her since she was neither wealthy nor of royal birth; for nobody knew her, not even her neighbours. It is just ridicule also when he says: When she was hated by the carpenter and turned out, neither divine power nor the gift of persuasion saved her. (1.39)

Obviously a good deal of these attacks on Mary and Jesus could actually have been spoken by Jewish as well as pagan opponents; the story of Panthera is well known from Jewish sources.[21] What is striking for our purposes here is that virtually every objection raised by Celsus' Jew is answered by the narrative account of the Protevangelium, a correspondence too impressive to be written off as coincidental:

Did Jesus invent the story of his virgin birth? The narrative shows that Mary really was a virgin. In fact, Joseph was given a test that revealed he did not father Jesus, and Mary was given a virginity test to show that she conceived without ever having sex. They passed with flying colors, to the amazement of all who looked on. Moreover, the special nature of the birth was shown by the fact that time stood still when the savior appeared into the world, by the vision of glory at the cave that both Joseph and the midwife witnessed, and above all by the postpartum inspection of Mary by the doubting Salome. She was intact, even after giving birth.

Was Jesus born in a remote Jewish village? On the contrary, he was born near Bethlehem, famous as the home of King David; moreover, his birth occurred there because Joseph and Mary had traveled on order of the Roman emperor Augustus (17.1). Furthermore, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is specifically said to be a fulfillment of prophecy (21.2).

Was Jesus' mother a simple country woman? In fact, her father Joachim was extremely wealthy (1.1); he appears to have lived in Jerusalem, the capital city, in close proximity to the Temple of God (7.2); and he was customarily allowed to offer his gifts to God first, before all other

Israelites, showing his extraordinarily high status. Moreover, Mary would be highly revered "among all generations" 6.2); and the "entire house of Israel loved her" (7.3). In fact, "all the generations of earth" would bless her (12.1).

Did she earn her living by spinning? No, she did not need to earn a living. Early in life her needs were supplied by her fabulously wealthy father; then she was fed by an angel of God in the Temple (8.1); and then she was supported by a wealthy businessman, her espoused Joseph. When she did spin it was not to make money but in order to fulfill a sacred duty, as she was given the honor of spinning part of the curtain for the holy Temple of God (10.1–2).

Did she live a life of poverty? Quite the contrary, her father was extremely rich and her husband, Joseph, was a well-to-do man of business.

Was she a commoner (not of royal blood)? In fact, she came from a family that was inordinately wealthy and among the upper-tier aristocrats of the land. More than that, she enjoyed divine favor from the time of her birth through her upbringing in the Temple, where she was fed by an angel of God.

Was she completely unknown, even to her neighbors? No, actually, "all Israel" knew her, even when she was still a child. As she grew, she became a favorite of the aristocratic priests who were at the center of the religion.

Was her husband a lowly carpenter? On the contrary, he was a major building contractor (9.2).

Was she expelled from her house and divorced by her husband when he discovered that she was pregnant? In fact, he was dissuaded by an angel of the Lord from abandoning her, and he "watched over her," (14.2) taking her into his home.

Was she (legally) convicted of committing adultery? No, she was tried on the charges of adultery and legally exonerated by a sacred test that showed she had never had sexual relations (chs. 15-16).

Was the real father of the child a soldier named Panthera? On the contrary, she conceived by the Word of God, the living God, and the power of God (11.2–3).

Was Jesus then an illegitimate child? In fact, he was the literal son of God, destined to be "a great king to Israel" (20.3) and who was himself worthy

of worship.

Did no one believe her story? On the contrary, everyone believed her, in no small measure because God revealed the truth in dreams and sacred tests to the satisfaction of all: Joseph, the Jewish priests, and the Jewish people.

It is true that there are other charges that Celsus levels against the infant Jesus—especially involving his "escape" to Egypt—that do not appear to be answered by the narrative of the Protevangelium. That may either be because of oversight, because the author simply chose not to respond to everything, because the ending of the narrative at some point became muddled or lost (when it shifts to the preservation of John from the wrath of Herod, rather than Jesus), or because it was not written directly to counter Celsus per se, but to counter the kinds of attacks that are now known from Celsus. In any event, it is quite clear from the point-by-point refutation that what we are dealing with here is a narrative that serves not only to entertain its readers with stories about Mary's life and the coming into the world of the infant Jesus, and not only to provide an encomium on the mother of the Son of God. It also is an account that serves to stave off the attacks on both Mary and Jesus by opponents of the faith, both pagan and Jewish.

Other Polemical Targets?

In view of the emphases of the Protevangelium, it can well be imagined that the author's apologetic agenda, directed to outsiders, found its complement in certain polemical motives related to intramural conflicts. For example, in addition to defending the character of Jesus' divine birth from attacks by opponents such as Celsus, the narrative could just as well function to debunk the views of adoptionists, such as the Ebionites from the Jewish side or the Theodotians from the gentile one, both of whom held that Jesus was naturally born of the union of Joseph and Mary and only acquired his divine sonship at his baptism.[22] In the Protevangelium, on the contrary, Jesus was miraculously conceived and miraculously born the Son of God—God's son from birth—born to one who was herself miraculously conceived, born, and raised to be a fit vessel for the Son of God.

One might imagine as well that the views of the Protevangelium may have been prompted by views expressed by Christian thinkers on the

opposite end of the theological spectrum from the adoptionists, that is, docetists such as Marcion, who denied that Jesus appeared as a human being into the world as an infant at all, but that he descended in the appearance of a grown man during the reign of Tiberius (Tertullian *Adv. Marc*. 4.7). Proto-orthodox writers accused Marcion of altering the Gospel of Luke to promote this view.[23] The forger of the Protevangelium takes the opposite side and approaches the matter from the opposite tack. Rather than truncating Luke (as Marcion is alleged to have done), this author expands it, precisely back into the period where Marcion refused to go, accepting as authoritative very "Jewish" traditions about Jesus' prehistory that Marcion, who opposed all things Jewish, would have found repugnant.[24]

It should not seem odd that a writing such as the Protevangelium could fulfill these various apologetic and polemical functions at one and the same time. Already Tertullian recognized that Marcion's understanding of Christ coming into the world coincided with the non-Christian Jewish view, that he was not the Christ predicted by Scripture:

> So, then, since heretical madness was claiming that that Christ had come who had never been previously mentioned, it followed that it had to contend that that Christ was not yet come who had from all time been foretold: and so it was compelled to form an alliance with Jewish error, and from it to build up an argument for itself. (*Adv. Marc*. 3.6)

Or as he says more pithily (he restates the argument repeatedly):

> It is now possible for the heretic to learn, and the Jew as well, what he ought to know already, the reason for the Jew's errors: for from the Jew the heretic has accepted guidance in this discussion, the blind borrowing from the blind, and has fallen into the same ditch. (3.7)

At the same time, an anti-docetic function of the text may appear less plausible since the physical nature of the boy Jesus is not emphasized at all, except to the extent that Mary was obviously physically pregnant before giving birth; hence the horror of Joseph and the Jewish priests.[25] But when

Jesus comes into the world he scarcely seems to be a real child who has experienced a real birth: he does not appear to have come through the birth canal (hence the postpartum "proof") and he is able already to walk (as he toddles over to his mother) and to perform miracles (curing Salome's burning hand). If this was a forger who wanted to stress the reality of the fleshly appearance of Jesus, who appeared in the world as a real human being, born like other humans, he did a rather bad job of it.

It is more likely, then, that if polemics are involved at all, they are directed against an adoptionistic view of Christ. What seems relatively certain is that whether or not internecine conflicts affected the account, the apologetic need was foremost. This is a forgery that defends Jesus and his mother against the charges leveled against them by antagonistic opponents of the faith, allegedly written by someone uniquely qualified to know the truth of the matter.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

In a very different apologetic vein are the martyrologies that begin to appear in the Christian literary tradition beginning in the early third century. I give that date in full cognizance of its problems. Normally the first instantiation of the genre is taken to be the Martrydom of Polycarp, usually dated to within a year of Polycarp's execution, which is variously located—based on a number of complex factors—to the middle of the second century or a bit later (156 CE? 177 CE?).[26] But the date of the narrative correlates to the time of Polycarp's death only if we take at face value the author's claim to have been eyewitness at the event. That, however, is precisely the point that must be decided. Whether it is a contemporary account, or one written much later, the Martyrdom of Polycarp has clear apologetic features. In this it is like the other martyrologies that sprang up in its wake, which strive to show both that the Christians were innocent of any wrongdoing that might have warranted their harsh treatment and that in the midst of their suffering they received such divine succor as to reveal the ultimate truth of the religion for which they were willing to die.

The description of the arrest, trial, and martyrdom of Polycarp comes to us in the form of a letter allegedly written by a member of Polycarp's home church of Smyrna who had, along with the others, observed the execution.

It is addressed to the church of Philomelium: "The church of God that temporarily resides in Smyrna to the church of God that temporarily resides in Philomelium, and to all congregations of temporary residents everywhere, who belong to the holy and universal church (Pref.)."[27]

The account was not, of course, actually written by the entire church, but by someone belonging to it. We learn at the end of the letter that this was a person named Evaristus (20.2: "the one who is writing the letter"; this would make him either the actual author or the scribe taking dictation). Marcion (unrelated to the heretic of the same name; 20.1) was the one who allegedly carried the letter and authenticated its contents (διὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἡμῶν Μαρκίωνος).[28] The letter has not come down to us in a straight line of transmission, however. According to the concluding colophon, it was copied several times within solidly proto-orthodox avenues of production, but came to be lost until a preternatural vision revealed its existence to Pionius, himself a later martyr, whose own death is described (in a different text) in ways highly reminiscent of Polycarp's, as we will see. Pionius' copy of the letter, then, brought the account out of hibernation and made it more widely available:

> Gaius transcribed these things from the papers of Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp; he also lived in the same city as Irenaeus. And I, Socrates, have written these things in Corinth from the copies made by Gaius. May Grace be with everyone. And I, Pionius, then sought these things and produced a copy from the one mentioned above, in accordance with a revelation of the blessed Polycarp, who showed it to me, as I will explain in what follows. And I gathered these papers together when they were nearly worn out by age…. (22.2–3)

It is clear even from a superficial reading of the "Martyrdom" that it was never meant to be a disinterested account of the death of Polycarp, but had from the outset literary pretensions and apologetic motives. The author engages in polemics against other groups, including the Jews who are especially eager to participate in the killing of the Christian witness, and, from a completely other sphere, the voluntary martyrs (Montanists?) who, contrary to the Gospel (and contrary to Polycarp), needlessly offer

themselves up as sacrifices to the cause. Yet more germane for our purposes, the account goes out of its way to show that Polycarp's death was "in conformity with the Gospel"; on page after page the events mirror episodes known from the canonical accounts of Jesus' passion. In addition, the author stresses not only that true martyrs were doing the will of God, but that as a reward God gave them strength to endure their inhumane torments with a fortitude that could only be ascribed to divine intervention (e.g., 2.2–4). One result was the amazement of the crowds who looked on, who realized that the Christians were not normal humans (2.2–4, 3.2, 16.1). In other words, this work is driven by an apologetic impulse to defend the divine character of this persecuted religion.

Older Questions About Historicity

It has long been recognized that there are problems with taking the Martyrdom of Polycarp at face value as a straightforward historical record of what actually happened to the bishop of Smyrna. The numerous parallels to the Gospel records of Jesus' death appear contrived in places, the account is chock full of miraculous elements, some of which—one immediately thinks of the dove that emerges from Polycarp's side when the executioner slices him open—are too dubious even for the most credulous of critical readers, and the events in the aftermath of his death, when the Christians gather his remains to store in a sacred place to be revered on the "birthday" of his death, are difficult to assign to a generously early date. Or so it has seemed, at least, to some scholars since Lipsius first raised questions about the authenticity of the account in 1874.[29] It was four years later that a thorough assault was made by Theodor Keim,[30] who argued that the Martyrdom was dependent on the Letter of Lyons and Vienne and on the Acts of Thecla (Polycarp's blood dowsing his fire was drawn from the miraculous thunderstorm that dowsed Thecla's). The account, then, could not date from before the end of the second century. Moreover, the phrase "the catholic church in Smyrna" (16.2) indicates, for Keim, that it was written at a time when local churches were differentiating themselves from one another, and that Smyrna had a number of churches in its midst, only one of which was claiming to be the "catholic" church. This, for Keim, must indicate a date no earlier than Cyprian. Moreover, the lull in the persecution at the time the letter was written would fit the period

immediately following the persecution of Decius. Some such mid-third-century date makes sense, as well, of a number of other themes in the book: the sacrificial deaths of martyrs in relation to the death of Christ (a theme first found in Tertullian); the reverence of a martyr's death day; the valuation of the martyr's bones as "precious stones" (not attested otherwise till the third century); and so on. Keim's conclusion: the account achieved its shape only some time in the third century.[31]

Scholarship in this field, however, is resilient, and most historians continued to take the account at face value as an eyewitness report, with, perhaps, a few excesses at key points. A major shift occurred with the work of Hans von Campenhausen, who provided a critically respectable way of isolating a historical kernel in the account, while recognizing that it is also filled with literary and theological excesses that occasionally compromise its historical veracity.[32] Von Campenhausen's famous and influential claim was that an original bare-bones account of the death of Poly-carp had been redacted several times over the years, into the form we now have. The grounds for evaluating the various redactions were not only the anachronisms and supernatural elements, but also the fact that when Eusebius cites the account, he intimates the existence of a different, much shorter version of the events.

Von Campenhausen argued that the original eyewitness account of Polycarp's death underwent four redactions, most of them after Eusebius' day. An anti-Montanist redactor added to the account the condemnation of Quintus and of voluntary martyrdom in chapter 4, as well as the reverence for the martyrs in 17.2–3 and 18.2. A "Gospel Redactor," working after Eusebius, added the well-known parallels that showed Polycarp's death was very much like that of Jesus. A later redactor added several miraculous elements to the account (5.2, 15.2). Finally both the epilogue dating the event (ch. 21) and the colophon indicating the transmission history of the text (ch. 22) were added at a later stage. Once one removes these *Interpolationen*, one is left with an authentic account of Polycarp's death recorded by an eyewitness.

Von Campenhausen's view was controversial and found considerable resistance among some reviewers, who found the proliferation of redactors excessive.[33] It nonetheless had its attractions, as indicated by the most recent study—critical of the authenticity of the account—by Candida Moss:

"Contesting the integrity of the account itself has formed a kind of via media for scholars wishing both to account for anachronisms and to preserve the historical quality of the account."[34] As Dehandschutter noted, "This theory became a 'commonplace' for much research within German scholarship."[35] Since the 1980s, however, it has fallen on hard times, as seen in the works of Dehandschutter, Saxer, and Buschmann.[36] As Schoedel was able to state: "Although serious doubts have been entertained about the integrity of MPol, critical opinion is now moving in the opposite direction…. Here, then, is the final rejection of the notion that originally MPol would naturally have contained a more or less factual account uncontaminated by miracles and explicit theological reflection."[37]

And yet, one is still left with enormous problems. If the questions raised concerning the integrity of the account cannot be sustained, one still has a report that both claims to be by an eyewitness and that presents numerous nonhistorical and anachronistic features. In light of the latter, can the book really be accepted as coming from an eyewitness?

A renewed attack on the authenticity of the account was launched by Silvia Ronchey in 1990.[38] Ronchey argued that the Martyrdom derives from the late third century (260–80 CE), about a century after Polycarp's death (which she dates to 167 CE), and was written largely for polemical reasons. The account comes from a single author and is not heavily redacted. In her view, Lipsius and Keim were right to recognize that the anachronisms of the text need to be taken seriously as markers of a late date; moreover, the denunciation of voluntary martyrdom in the Quintus episode of chapter 4 is aimed at Montanists, specifically in the church of Philomelium, and thus could be possible only in the third century when Montanism was strong in Phrygia. Other non-historical features involve the downplaying of the role of the imperial governor in Polycarp's death, the elevated role of the mob, and of the Jews in particular. All these features are to be explained as an attempt to exculpate the Roman governor. The text is, in other words, a pro-Roman polemic—or rather apologia—dated best in the late third century.

Renewed Questions of Authenticity

It must be said that reviewers were not kind to Ronchey's monograph, and few found it convincing.[39] But as Moss has vigorously argued more

recently, one does not need to follow Ronchey in all of her positions in order to recognize the enormous problems with the text. In fact, given these problems it is very hard indeed to see how the account can be accepted as anything like trustworthy—that is, an authentic, eyewitness account.

To begin with—a factor rarely noted—it is precisely the claims of the author to be an eyewitness that show we are not dealing with an eyewitness account. One should notice where the author's asseverations occur. They occur at the very points of the narrative that are the most incredible and least susceptible of critical acceptance. Whenever a miracle happens, the author vouches for its occurrence by claiming to have observed it. The first time this happens is already in the summarizing account of the unbelievable noble endurance of torments by the Christian martyrs:

> For who would not be astounded by their nobility, endurance, and love of the Master? For they endured even when their skin was ripped to shreds by whips, revealing the very anatomy of their flesh, down to the inner veins and arteries, while bystanders felt pity and wailed. But they displayed such nobility that none of them either grumbled or moaned, clearly showing us all that in that hour, while under torture, the martyrs of Christ had journeyed far away from the flesh, or rather, that the Lord was standing by, speaking to them. (2.2)

Not only did the Christians face brutal and excruciating torture, but they—all of them—refrained even from uttering a moan. That showed "to us" that they were receiving divine succor.

Credulity is strained even more in the next two eyewitness reports. The first is when Polycarp enters the place of his final trial: "But as he entered the stadium a voice came to Polycarp from heaven: 'Be strong Polycarp, and be a man.' No one saw who had spoken, but those among our people who were there heard the voice." (9.1). This voice from heaven, then, was not heard by anyone else; it was a miraculous exhortation available only to the Christians with privileged access to the heavenly realm.

The final eyewitness guarantee of a miracle is the most striking. It occurs at the first attempt of the enemies of God to destroy his cherished saint:

> When [Polycarp] sent up the "Amen" and finished the prayer, the men in charge of the fire touched it off. And as a great flame blazoned forth we beheld a marvel—we to whom it was granted to see, who have also been preserved to report the events to the others. For the fire, taking on the appearance of a vaulted room, like a boat's sail filled with the wind, formed a wall around the martyrs' body. And he was in the center, not like burning flesh but like baking bread or like gold and silver being refined in a furnace. And we perceived a particularly sweet aroma, like wafting incense or some other precious perfume. (15.1–2)

The fire does not touch the martyr's body, but forms a wall around him; his body was not burned; and what wafted from the pyre was not the smell of reeking flesh but of perfume. Not everyone noticed this, though, but only the eyewitness who can guarantee the truth of the report since he and the other Christians were there, were really there.

The problem with this alleged eyewitness report should be clear. It is precisely at the most disputable and incredible parts of the narrative that the author inserts himself as someone who can testify to what he heard, saw, and smelled. He does not insert himself at nonproblematic points. His self-assertion is meant, then, to provide much-needed assurance for anyone inclined to think that those tortured ever might have moaned, or who doubt that voices come down from the heavens, or who might reasonably think that the flesh of martyrs could burn or stink.[40]

Apart from the miraculous elements of the text—which include the martyr's blood gushing forth in such profusion as to douse the flames of his pyre, and a dove emerging from his side and flying to the heavens—there are other clearly nonhistorical features of the text, which should at least give one pause before too readily insisting that this really is a firsthand report. For one thing, it defies belief that the animal games and execution of criminals described in the text could have happened in a "stadium" (8.3, 9.1). Animal hunts happened in amphitheaters, where the high walls would protect the crowds from hungry beasts who might want the choice morsels on offer by spectators, as Gary Bisbee notes:

> Τὸ στάδιον would most properly denote a race track and not a place of butchery such as was the amphitheater. The stadium was normally a long and open-ended construction, often amounting to little more than a race track between two hills upon which spectators sat. A stadium would not have had the high inner walls that an amphitheater possessed to keep wild animals and gladiators from killing spectators.[41]

This was not written by someone who was there, or possibly by someone who was *ever* present at animal hunts, gladiatorial contests, or Christian executions. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that there is no official trial of the condemned, but only a summary mock trial that does not follow any known legal precedent (even though allegedly "observed" by an eyewitness). Even Bisbee, who very much wants to find something historical lying behind the traditions of the narrative, acknowledges that the account as we have it is not a real trial, based on a surviving commentarius. If a real trial did take place, it would have happened sometime before the scene in the stadium.[42] But it is difficult to imagine when that might have been, given the flow of the narrative. It is better, with Moss, to see this account as modeled not on something that actually happened but on the Gospel accounts.[43]

The other pretensions to historicity in the account also fail. In chapter 21 the author gives us a precise indication of when the martyrdom took place: the eighth hour "on the second day of the new month of Xanthikos, February 23," when "Philip of Tralles was high priest" and "Statius Quadratus was proconsul." In this attempt to locate the narrative in time and place, however, the author has blundered. Timothy Barnes has shown that the dates simply do not work. Philip the Asiarch was high priest in 149–50, but "no conceivable argument will put the pro-consulate of Statius Quadratus before 153/4."[44] There was, in other words, a three year gap—and no one writing at either time could fail to know that the two terms did not overlap. This is written by someone living later.

And what he is writing is a kind of historical legend. The legendary character of the account is seen in numerous details, including the remarkable "coincidences" that make Polycarp's trial and death so much like that of Jesus: Polycarp does not turn himself in but waits to be betrayed

(1.2); he knows about his coming execution in advance and predicts it to his followers (5.2); he prays intensely before his arrest (7.1–3); he asks that God's will be done (7.1); the official in charge of his arrest is named Herod (6.2); Polycarp rides into town on a donkey (8.1); and so on. These are literary touches, not historical recollections. So too other parts of the story, including the remarkable account of Germanicus in chapter 3, who evidently has a wild beast standing meekly by, waiting for his suicidal impulse. To leave this life, he drags the beast-in-waiting onto himself, forcing it to kill him. It is hard indeed to know how we are supposed to imagine this actually worked.

And then there is Quintus, the voluntary martyr turned coward. As Moss has argued, the Quintus episode creates enormous problems for the traditional dating of the text, seen simply from a traditio-historical perspective. If the account dates, say, from 155–167 (as we have seen, scholars differ), then we have the unparalleled situation that this text is the earliest to recognize the category of "martyr" at all; at the same time it is also the first to refer to voluntary martyrs; and yet further, it is the first to condemn the practice of voluntary martyrdom. As Moss notes: "it is remarkable to suppose that the first text to construct an ideology of martyrdom accurately anticipates later 'enthusiasm' for an as-yet-undefined practice."[45]

Problematic for entirely other reasons is the account of what happens in the aftermath of Polycarp's death. The Jews, moved by the devil, are intent not to allow the Christians to collect Polycarp's body "even though many were desiring to do so and to have a share in his holy flesh" (ch. 17). And so, the centurion ordered the body to be burned. That did not hinder the Christians' enthusiasm for Polycarp's material remains, however: "And so, afterwards, we removed his bones, which were more valuable than expensive gems and more precious than gold, and put them in a suitable place." It is there that the author anticipates celebrating, with his fellow believers, the "birthday of his martyrdom."

One might be able to imagine some kind of "cult of the martyr" already at the time of Polycarp's death, as Saxer and others have argued.[46] But where do we observe anything like this adoration of the martyr's relics? Outside of this text, we do not find such a thing, as Moss has noted, until the third-century Acts of Thomas (dated ca. 230 CE).[47] Polycarp's body is not simply treated here with respect and given a decent burial. His bones

are considered more precious than gems and gold and are stored where worship takes place. Yet "the practice of collecting and venerating the bodies of the martyrs is unparalleled in second-century Christian literature."[48] The author, in fact, has to defend the practice by claiming that the adoration of the remains of the martyr would never replace the worship of Christ (17.2). This defense shows that the practice was far enough advanced as to be open to attack. In other words, it came at a time when adoration of relics was a known and criticized phenomenon.

Equally telling is one other portion of the text meant to ensure its authenticity, but which, when examined critically, has precisely the opposite effect. The colophon, as cited already above, provides a kind of history of transmission of the text, in which Irenaeus had a copy of the book among his papers, which was then copied by Gaius, whose work was copied by Socrates; then, many years later, when the copy of Socrates was old and falling to ruin, it was revitalized by Pionius, who received a revelation from the martyred Polycarp himself, presumably telling him where to find the manuscript. The general implausibilities of the case—involving visions of a long-dead Polycarp and the miraculous recovery of his story—speak against anything like historicity. The narrative functions, in fact, like the eyewitness reports generally in this account, to make believable that which, on the surface, defies belief. If this closing account were historical, it would be passing strange that Irenaeus himself, the ultimate authority cited, never mentions either the letter of Polycarp or the martyrdom. It cannot be objected that the colophon was added only later after the original text had long been in circulation; we have no manuscripts that lack it, but only an extended form in the Moscow manuscript that heightens its original emphases. The idea of a story of discovery is by now familiar to us. It functions here as it does in other places, such as the Apocalypse of Paul, to explain why the account has now surfaced in the middle to late third century (after the days of Pionius) when it was previously unknown to interested Christian readers.

From all these historical problems, it should be clear that the Martyrdom of Polycarp does not go back to an eyewitness account written within a year of the event, say 157 or 166 CE. It was written at least some fifty years later. It was not really produced by Evaristus, carried and authenticated by Marcion, on behalf of the Christians of Smyrna who, along with the two named figures, actually saw these things take place. It is a legendary

account written simply as if by eyewitnesses. And so it is a forgery. The events it narrates had been in oral circulation down to the time of the author, which is no doubt why there are remnants of historical reminiscences that do indeed make sense in a second-century setting.[49] The story was not made up whole cloth. But it was also not a firsthand account. Its attempts to validate its miraculous claims are simply part of the forgery; by claiming to have been there, the author can establish the truth claims of his message.

It should be reemphasized that the author is interested in other forms of polemic as well. He is most emphatically opposed to voluntary martyrdom that the orthodox later came to associate—rightly or wrongly is beside the point, for our purposes—with the Montanist movement (ch. 4). Moreover, it is the Jews who are said to be the most eager (and accustomed) to gather the firewood to burn the Christians (13.1); and they are key in the refusal to provide access to the corpse once the deed is done (17.2). They are the enemy, more than the governor who is driven by the mobs to condemn Polycarp. Here again, then, the apologetic impulses of the text accompany its opposition to the Jews. Its major contention, however, is that God was on the side of Polycarp as he was on the side of the other martyrs who preceded him in dying a death "in conformity with the Gospel." At the end of the day, this is apologia in martyrological guise, produced as an eyewitness testimony by a forger who wanted his readers to know that they could rest assured in the factual accuracy of his legendary report.

OTHER MARTYROLOGIES

The Martyrdom of Polycarp is not the only martyrology to come down to us from the early church that is written as a first-person narrative in order to authenticate the accuracy of its tales. There are, of course, a large number of martyr texts. Those with the greatest (though often slight) claims to "reliability" have been collected in the handy edition by Mursurillo.[50] More than anyone else, Gary Bisbee has tried to show how one can establish what is historical in them.[51] There are no grounds, however, for seeing any of them as thoroughly accurate representatives of what actually happened. Most of the accounts are simply third-person narratives; some of them, though, do contain first-person passages that function to "guarantee" the accuracy of the report. With the exception of the well-known first example

that we will consider, the first-person narrators are not named, however, and so in these instances we are dealing with non-pseudepigraphic forgeries.[52]

The Passion of Perpetua

Augustine was the first to express doubts about the authorship of the "diary" kept by Perpetua prior to her martyrdom in 203 CE. When speaking of Perpetua's brother Dinocrates, Augustine says in passing "… nor does the saint herself, or whoever it was who wrote the account…"[53] Whereas many scholars continue to think the diary an authentic production of Perpetua herself,[54] others have harbored considerable doubt. A particularly interesting case has been made by Thomas Heffernan, who focuses on how the verb tenses and sequences work in the piece.[55] Although Heffernan acknowledges that the genres of "diary" and "autobiography" were not set in stone in antiquity, they do evidence a difference in reference to time. Autobiography "provides attempts to a coherent interpretation of the past from a future perspective."[56] A diary, on the other hand, gives accounts of the past as fragments of experience as perceived from the present. Diaries, then, do not provide unified coherence between past events; they tend to be episodic and to lack any kind of teleology. An autobiography, in contrast, reconstitutes the self as an agent in an attempt to impose meaning on events.

For Heffernan, the Passio Perpetua is a kind of "hybrid of these two types." But what is most striking is that the verb tenses fit an autobiographical mode, in which the past connections are used to provide temporal coherence. Terms such as "after a few days," or "many days," or "a few hours later" indicate the passage of time and so provide a kind of narrative sequence. The reason this matters: "Such periodicity is not typical of a narrative written diurnally, in snatches when the hideous oppression of the prison abated; rather it suggests a composition written sometime after the events have transpired."[57]

If Heffernan is right, then what we have in the Diary of Perpetua is not a diary, but a later author—claiming to be Perpetua—writing in autobiographical mode, pretending to write a diary. In other words, the "diary" would be a forgery, a conclusion reached by other scholars on yet other grounds.[58] Like the other martyrological texts, it functions

apologetically in showing that, contrary to appearances, God is at work in the lives and sufferings of the martyrs, empowering them in the face of horrible opposition and torment, and using them as a witness to the truth of the gospel.

The Martyrdom of Pionius

Probably written sometime around 300 CE the Martyrdom of Pionius "is the only substantial martyrdom that we possess which pretends to date from the period of the Decian persecution."[59] The opening of the account is a bit odd, in that it indicates that the bulk of the writing—which is narrated almost entirely in the third person—is a book by Pionius about himself (even though for the most part it does not employ the first person):

> More fitting is it that we should remember the martyr Pionius seeing that this apostolic man, being one of us, kept many from straying while he dwelt in the world, and when he was finally called to the Lord and bore witness, he left us this writing for our instruction that we might have it even to this day as a memorial of his teaching. (1.2)[60]

The account does not move into the first person until near the end, and then it is clearly not Pionius speaking, as the author claims to have witnessed the miracles that transpired at the martyr's death. The entire account, however, bears the marks of literary license, if not wholesale invention, since, as widely recognized, it is modeled on the Martyrdom of Polycarp. As we have seen, Pionius, not coincidentally, is named in the earlier martyrdom as the one who received a revelation from the long-dead Polycarp concerning the whereabouts of the lost account of his martyrdom. The account of Pionius' own martyrdom, perhaps not remarkably, is dated to the anniversary of Polycarp's (a century later); it too occurs on a Great Sabbath. Here, as in the earlier account, the Christian martyr is wounded, but acts as if he is not. Here too the execution occurs, remarkably, in a stadium. A figure named Marcion appears in both texts—here in connection with a follower of the heretic who is martyred along with the orthodox man of God. The Jewish antipathy is as strong here as in the earlier account. The

author speaks of Jews as the "enemies" (4.8), and asks rhetorically "Who forced the Jews to sacrifice to Beelphegor? Or partake of the sacrifices offered to the dead? Or to fornicate with the daughters of foreigners ? Or to sacrifice their sons and daughters to idols? To murmur against God? To slander Moses?" (4.11) With biting contrast the author indicates that "*we* did not slay our prophets nor did we betray Christ and crucify him" (13.2).

It is not until the end of the account that the author introduces a first-person narrative:

> For after the fire had been extinguished, those of us who were present saw his body like that of an athlete in full array at the height of his powers. His ears were not distorted; his hair lay in order on the surface of his head; and his beard was full as though with the first blossom of hair. His face shone once again—wondrous grace! —so that the Christians were all the more confirmed in the faith, and those who had lost the faith returned dismayed and with fearful consciences. (22.2–4)

Here too, then, we have an author who wants to be both an eyewitness and a faithful testifier to the miraculous events surrounding the martyrdom of one beloved of God. But the account, as widely recognized, is an invention; the author was merely claiming to have seen it take place. Here again we have an instance of non-pseudepigraphic forgery.

The Martyrdom of Marian and James

There is no better way to show the unusual authorial problems of the early-fourth-century Martyrdom of Marian and James than to provide a lengthy citation of its narrative, in which the author is the closest companion of the martyrs who accompanies them at the time of their arrest:

> To me have these noble witnesses of God left the task of proclaiming their glory, I refer to Marian and James, among the dearest of our brethren. Both of these as you are aware, were bound to me not only by our common sharing in the mystery of our faith, but also by the fact that we lived together in a family spirit…. It

> was their wish that their battle … should be communicated to their fellow Christians through me…. And it was not without reason that in their close intimacy they laid upon me the task which I am about to fulfill. For who can question the common life we shared in times of peace when the same period of persecution discovered us living in unbroken affection? (1.2–4)
>
> We were on our way together to Numidia…. But an entire band of violent and unscrupulous centurions swooped on the country-house which sheltered us as though it was a notorious centre of the faith.… And while the ripe hour of the divine choice made more stringent demands on them, it also bound me to them with a tiny share in my brothers' glory; for I too was dragged from Muguae to Cirta…. For in exhorting me with special intensity they betrayed by their effusive joy the fact that they too were Christians. They were then questioned and were led off to prison…. (2.1; 4.3, 6, 9–10)

It is difficult indeed to understand how the author himself was not arrested and sent to prison, if he really was such a close companion and eyewitness of all these things. Musurillo can simply assume that "the author had presumably been freed as not falling under the Valerian edicts" (p. xxxiv) although the account says nothing of the matter. Moreover, Musurillo admits that "some scholars have had serious doubts about the authenticity" of the account (p. xxxiii). A serious option worth entertaining is that here again we have a martyrology written in the first person not because the author was really there to see these things happen, but in order to stimulate interest in his account and assure the reader of its accuracy.

The Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius

Often thought to have been based on work produced by a disciple of Cyprian,[61] the Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius is another account of the execution of Christian clergy under the persecution of Valerian. It is allegedly written by one of the Christians who was arrested, as a kind of memoir that cannot help but call to mind the Passion of Perpetua, as here too a number of visions of those who are jail-bound are presented, reliably,

by a first-person narrator:

> Love and a sense of obligation have urged us to write this account, that we might leave to all future brethren a loyal witness to the grandeur of God and a historical record of our labours and our sufferings for the Lord (1.1)…. All of us were arrested (2.1)…. We got the news of our sentence from the soldiers: the governor had threatened us the day before with fire…. (3.1)[62]

At chapter 12 the narrative shifts to a different "first person," reminiscent, again, of the Passio Perpetua: "This was the joint letter written to us from prison.… Flavian privately enjoined on me the task of adding to their account whatever might be missing. Hence I have added the rest as was necessary." This new author continues on, then, with a third-person narrative (with occasional references to himself as an observer) to the end. The first-person narrators are here again interspersed with third-person narrations, both to add immediacy to the account and to verify the accuracy of its reports. Not everyone has been fooled, however; in their 1890 edition of *The Passion of Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas*, J. Rendell Harris and S. K. Gifford called it "a deliberate forgery."[63]

The Acts of Ignatius (Antiochene Version)

The legendary account of Ignatius' death by wild beasts in the arena in Rome comes to us in several forms, the most important of which, historically, is the so-called Antiochene version, which provides us, as well, with the authentic letter of Ignatius to the Romans, otherwise lacking from the epistles' textual tradition. Since Lightfoot's withering criticism, the Acts themselves have rarely been taken seriously as historical.[64] The surviving account is normally thought to derive from the fifth century, although Bisbee argues, somewhat implausibly, that it is ultimately based on a near contemporaneous second-century commentarius. In any event, the work that we have is late.[65]

The widely recognized problems with the account, as recounted by Lightfoot and Bisbee, include the following[66]:

The trial before the emperor Trajan in Antioch is dated to 106–07 CE, the ninth year of his reign; but Trajan did not come to Antioch until some seven years later.

The route taken by Ignatius in the Acts does not coincide with that presupposed in the authentic letters.

Whereas there is no persecution of the churches of Asia Minor in evidence in the authentic Ignatian letters, it is presupposed here.

Ignatius' own letter to Polycarp intimates that the two first met while Ignatius was en route to his martyrdom; in the Acts they have been companions from long before, as they both sat at the feet of the disciple John.

There is no reference to the Acts in either Eusebius or Jerome; and no manuscript attests the Acts until the sixth century.

Even though the trial of Ignatius is here narrated in the third person, the author moves to a first-person account, strikingly, as in the Acts of the Apostles, during a sea voyage leading to martyrdom: "Therefore continuing to enjoy fair winds, we were reluctantly hurried on in one day and a night" (ch. 5).[67] The account describes Ignatius' martyrdom by the wild beasts (ch. 6), and we are told that "only the harder portions of his holy remains were left, which were conveyed to Antioch and wrapped in linen, as an inestimable treasure left to the holy church by the grace which was in the martyr" (ch. 6). The account itself is then ensured through a first-person declaration:

> Having ourselves been eye-witnesses of these things, and having spent the whole night in tears within the house … it happened, when we fell deeply asleep, that some of us saw the blessed Ignatius suddenly standing among us and embracing us, while others saw him again praying for us, and still others saw him dripping with sweat, as if he had just come from his great labor, and standing by the Lord. When, therefore, we had with great joy witnessed these things and had compared our several visions together, we sang praise to God…. (ch. 7)

Here, then, as with the much-earlier Martyrdom of Polycarp, the first-person narrative serves to validate the claim to have observed a divine miracle.

All these martyrologies appear to have served multiple functions among their Christian readership. On one level they were entertaining, if in a rather grisly way. They also provided models of behavior for those who themselves might be threatened with persecution, torture, and death. And, importantly for our purposes, they were apologiae for the truthfulness of the Christian message in the face of opposition to it. Justin suggested that his observation of Christian martyrs played a role in his conversion (2 *Apol*. 12), and Tertullian famously argued against his belligerent pagan opponents that "We become more numerous every time we are hewn down by you: the blood of Christians is seed" (*Apol*. 50). The texts describing martyrdoms functioned in a similar way at the literary level, apologetically. They revealed the truth of the Christian gospel in the face of violent opposition to it, with the valiant deaths of the martyrs testifying to the power of God in the midst of a world that brought all its power to bear against him and his servants.

THE SYBILLINE ORACLES

Markedly different, but also fulfilling an apologetic function, the Sybilline oracles consist of twelve books of Jewish and Christian origin that present the "predictions" of the ancient pagan Sibyl. An anonymous Byzantine scholar of the sixth century CE compiled the surviving collection, which spans a seven-hundred-year period. He claims that he brought these writings together because he wanted to provide in one place oracles otherwise widely dispersed, which together, he avers,

> expound very clearly about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the divine Trinity, source of life; about the incarnate career of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, the birth, I mean, from an unchanging virgin, and the healings performed by him; similarly his life-giving passion and resurrection from the dead on the third day and the judgment which will take place. (Prologue)[68]

In fact, the majority of the oracles are not about the Trinity or Christ at all, but are of non-Christian Jewish origin. Two of them are indeed Christian (one, certainly), and several others represent Christian redactions of Jewish originals (through heavy interpolation).

Because of a fluke of transmission, the twelve books are numbered 1–8 and 11–14. The background to the collection involves the famous but no longer surviving pagan Sibylline oracles of Roman and, predominantly, Greek extraction. The full story of these "original" oracles is found elsewhere and need not deter us at great length; the story from Republican through early Imperial times, though, can be summarized briefly.[69]

From an early age there were known to be prophecies of the great Sibyl, an ancient Greek prophetess of astounding longevity attuned to communications of the gods, which she delivered in hexameter verse, often with the use of acrostics. As these prophecies proliferated over time, and came to be associated with numerous locations, stories arose of Sibyls living in different places. Varro made the canonical claim that there were ten Sibyls altogether.

In Roman times the best-known collection of the oracles came to be stored in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the capitol in Rome; these were consulted by the quindecimviri, on direction of the Senate, when divine instruction was sought in times of plague, famine, and prodigy. Evidently the collected books indicated the necessary ritual for dealing with dire situations. There is record of the books having been consulted some fifty times between 496 and 100 BCE. In 83 BCE, while Sulla was fighting his way up through Italy, the temple was destroyed, and with it the deposit of Sibylline books. That oracles had been widely in circulation before the event is shown by what happened in the wake of their disappearance from the capitol. In 76 BCE the consul Caius Curio proposed a commission to go to Erythrea in search of replacement oracles. The results were disappointing: only about a thousand verses were gathered from private sources (about a third of what had been lost). Further expeditions yielded other oracles in other localities. The quindecimviri were given the task of editing what had been collected. We do not know the criteria they used, but they evidently detected and expunged certain verses as interpolations.

In 28 BCE Augustus transferred the books to his new marble temple of Apollo on the Palatine. In 12 BCE, when he became pontifex maximus, Augustus ordered the retrieval of all circulating prophetic books in Greek

and Latin. Those that were anonymous or of unsuitable authorship were burned, some two thousand of them. Others were added to the official collection. Evidently these actions were undertaken to ensure that no unauthorized oracles would be in circulation; individuals were no longer allowed to possess any.

In 19 CE Tiberius had to deal with a popular rumor of a sibylline prophecy that Rome would perish "when thrice three hundred years have passed over" (a prophecy taken to refer to contemporary times). Tiberius intervened, declared the verses spurious, inspected all books of oracles in circulation, and burned the ones he disapproved of.

Eventually all the books were lost or destroyed. What we have now are Jewish and Christian versions, in which forgers, claiming to be the great Sibyl herself, place Jewish and Christian ideas, views, and predictions on the lips of the ancient prophetess.[70] Many of the Jewish creations are associated with Alexandria and evidence several obvious polemical and apologetic functions: to condemn idolatry; to propagate the Jewish faith, especially monotheism and ethics; and to stress the coming of eschatological judgment, particularly as this relates to the ultimate doom and downfall of Rome. As noted, the surviving Christian Sibyllina correlate to the Pseudo-Ignatian writings in that they constitute both original compositions and extensive redactions. In my discussion here I will deal with the interpolations first and then consider the original, forged, creations. In each instance we are probably dealing with different authors, who had, however, similar purposes. Among other things, they shared the common goal of apologia: the great and trustworthy pagan prophetess, the Sibyl, attests to the truth of the Christian message, and, especially, the truth of the Christian Savior.

The Christian Interpolations

As samples of how Christian authors placed their views both in the context of Jewish oracles and, as a consequence, on the lips of the ancient Sibyl, we can consider the striking examples from books 1, 2, and 8. Books 1 and 2 were originally a unity, composed together, by a Jewish author, but redacted at some time in the midsecond century, according to the dating of Collins.[71] Together these two books recount (or rather "predict") the appearance of ten generations of humans on earth, leading up to the time of the end. For some

unknown reason—possibly in the course of the Christian redaction—generations eight and nine have dropped out of the work. The tenor of the book is established at the outset:

> Beginning from the first generation of articulate men Down to the last, I will prophesy all in turn, Such things as were before, as are, and as will come upon The world through the impiety of men. (1.1–4)

There follows a discussion of the creation and "fall," and then the history of the human race in ten generations. A major Christian interpolation occurs in II. 324–400, in the midst of a discussion of the seventh generation of humans (the Titans). The interpolation is about Christ, his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and its effect on the Jews:

> Then indeed the son of the great God will come,
> Incarnate, likened to mortal men on earth,
> Bearing four vowels, and the consonants in him are two.
> I will state explicitly the entire number for you.
> For eight units, and equal number of tens in addition to these,
> And eight hundreds will reveal the name
> To men who are sated with faithlessness. But you, consider in your heart
> Christ, the son of the most high, immortal God. (II. 324–31)

The clever gematria is of the name ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, whose letters add up, remarkably, to 888. Not only, however, does the interpolation provide a pagan prediction of the coming of Christ. Closely tied to it is a vitriolic attack on the Jewish people, pronounced here by a pagan oracle in support of a Christian agenda. And so the oracle says that "Israel, with abominable lips and poisonous spittings will give this man blows" (II. 365–66); it also speaks of a "new sprout" that will emerge among the nations, who will "follow the law of the Great one" (by implied contrast with the old stump, II.383–84). The rhetoric becomes especially strong in II. 387–400: the "Hebrews" will "reap a bad harvest"—meaning that they will reap their awful reward for killing Christ. Specifically "a Roman king will ravage much gold and silver"; there will "be a great fall for those men when they launch on unjust haughtiness"; "the Hebrews will be driven from their land, wandering, being slaughtered, they will mix much darnel in their wheat… receiving the wrath of the great God in their bosom, since they committed an evil deed."

The interpolation is thus both apologetic, predicting reliably the coming of Christ, and polemical, against the Jews. This is a combination we have seen before and will see yet again. The Christian redaction of book 2 moves along similar lines, describing the final judgment from a Christian perspective, with Christ as judge, and providing graphic descriptions of the torments of the damned, all accompanied with more anti-Jewish invective.

Book 8 of the Oracles is particularly intriguing. There has been considerable scholarly dispute over how to divide the oracle, with Johannes Geffcken proposing a complex solution that derives three passages from a pagan source, intermingled with Christian redactions,[72] and Collins suggesting a simpler division of the book roughly in half, in which lines 1–216 are Jewish (except for II. 131–38, and a Christian interpolation involving eschatology in II.194–216) and 217–500 are Christian.[73] This Christian section begins in II. 217–50 with one of the best-known and intriguing features of the surviving Sibyllina, an acrostic poem, the first letters of each line spelling out the words ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ. Throughout the poem there is a strong emphasis on the flesh: Christ will "judge all flesh" (II. 218–19); the flesh of the dead will arise (I. 227); "fire will torment the lawless forever" (I. 228). The conclusion then is striking: "This is our God, now proclaimed in acrostics, the king, the immortal savior, who suffered for us" (II. 249–50).

The rest of the Christian interpolation involves a poetic celebration of Christ, a condemnation of idolatry, the need for ethical rigor in the face of the coming judgment, a paean to God, and a recounting of the incarnation event. Here too there appear to be some (implicit, at least) anti-Jewish materials: "They will stab his sides with a reed on account of their law" (I. 296). Even though one might take the referent to be the Romans, the following statement makes it appear to be to the Jews: "every law will be dissolved … on account of a disobedient people" (II. 300–01). This interpretation is confirmed later, in II. 305–8, when the Temple curtain is rent, "for no longer with secret law and temple must one serve the phantoms of the world." Later still the author appeals to "daughter Sion," and speaks of the "yoke of slavery, hard to bear, which lies on our neck … the godless ordinances and constraining bonds" (II. 324–28). And so, once more, we find a mixture of apologetics and polemics, the latter possibly against those who minimize the importance of the flesh, and certainly against the Jews.

The Christian Creations

Book VI of the Sibyllina is completely and incontrovertibly a Christian creation. The poem is quoted by Lactantius thirteen times in *De ira dei*, and so must date some time before 300 CE. A more precise date is not possible. The book presents a short twenty-eight-line hymn to Christ. There is no evidence of a pagan or Jewish substratum, and nothing, in fact, that connects it to the Sibyl, apart from its appearance in the collection. The high Christology of the piece is evident at the outset:

> I speak from my heart of the great famous son of the Immortal, To whom the Most High, his begetter, gave a throne to possess before he was born. …

Here, as in the interpolations, there is a good deal of anti-Jewish polemic. Christ is said to come to "a disobedient people" (I.11); the people of the "land of Sodom" have "evil afflictions … in store" (I. 2l),[74] for the people of this land "did not perceive your God when he came before mortal eyes" (II. 22-23). The author goes on to say that these people were the ones who

crowned Christ with thorns and gave him gall to drink (II. 23–25). As a result, the Jewish people will suffer: "That will cause great afflictions for you" (I. 25). The poem ends with a paean to the cross, the "blessed" wood that will ascend from earth and "see heaven as home when your fiery eye, O God, flashes like lightning" (II. 26–28).

John Collins considers book VII also to be a Christian composition, but in this case there is at least a modicum of doubt.[75] There are certainly Christian elements in the oracle, but there are scant grounds for deciding whether these came in by way of interpolation or were part of the original wording. In any event, Collins is certainly right that the book consists of a loose collocation of oracles, some of them judgments against the nations, bracketed, significantly, with descriptions of the past destruction by flood and the future destruction by fire. The Christian elements are for the most part found in II. 64–90. Here Christ is referred to as "your God" and is the one who was not recognized by the inhabitants of Coele-Syria (II. 64–66). A high Christology is evident here in the reference to "the sovereign Word, with the Father and Holy Spirit"; moreover, the incarnation is explicit: Christ "put on flesh but quickly flew to his Father's home" (II. 69–70).

One key passage is found in the ritualistic prescriptions of II. 76–84. Sacrifice to God is to be made, but not by burning incense or slaughtering animals (II. 77–78). Instead the worshiper is to take a wild dove and set it off while gazing to heaven. Then she is to pour a libation of water on pure fire, while crying out the following prayer: "As the father begot you, the Word, so I have dispatched a bird, a word which is swift reporter of words, sprinkling with holy waters your baptism, through which you were revealed out of fire" (II.82–84). Whereas Geffcken and Kurfess consider this to be a Gnostic ritual, and see other traces of Gnostic thought in the use of such terms as "the first ogdoad" (I. 140), John Gager has made an impassioned plea for restraint, arguing that ambiguous ritualistic formulations and isolated Gnostic-like terms a Gnostic text doth not make; far better simply to see the book as in some sense "syncretistic."[76] Much of the rest of the book deals with judgments on the nations and individuals, especially at the end when fire will devour the earth and all those who live on it, a fire that will torment them not briefly but for the years of ages forever (II. 127–28).

The Sibyllina as Apologetic Forgeries

It is fair to ask whether it is right to see the Christian Sibylline materials as forgeries, in any ordinary sense of the term. On one level they may not seem "forged" in that they represent claims to inspired divine prophecy. On the other hand, the Sibyl was indeed considered to be a human author (although a highly unusual one), who was often thought of as being a historical person from hoary antiquity, and these sundry Christian writers—both the interpolators and literary creators ex nihilo—were claiming to be her. At the least we can say that these books are redactional forgeries, in the sense laid out earlier in the study.[77] Even if book 6 was not originally attributed to the Sibyl (the matter is difficult to judge), in its surviving context it conveys her words. So too with the redacted books: in their present state they represent Christian reflections that are now given not by unknown poets and theologians, but by the great prophetess of Greek antiquity. The authors and redactors do not claim to be conveying the words of a divine being (Apollo, for example), but the words of a seer.

There is another form of Sibylline materials that survives from Christian antiquity, outside of the collection of Oracula Sibyllina that have come down to us. This involves references to and quotations of the Sibyl in Christian writers of the early centuries. Some of the quotations do not correspond with what can now be found in the surviving fourteen books, and so they require a different treatment. In many of these Patristic references the apologetic function of the Christian Sibyl is particularly evident.

Apart from the reference to the Sibyl in the Shepherd of Hermas (a case of false identification, when Hermas thinks the elderly lady representing the church is the ancient prophetess; Vision 2.4), the first clear references occur in Justin: "Indeed Sibyl and Hystaspes foretold that all corruptible things are to be destroyed by fire" (*Apol*. 1. 20). This is an apt summary of what is found in the surviving books; but it is so general as to make closer identification impossible. More telling are the quotations in Pseudo-Justin *Cohortio* (a misattributed, not forged, work). This anonymous apologist refers to the Sibyl on numerous occasions, especially in chapters 16 and 37–38. In chapter 16 we are told that the "ancient and very old Sibyl" was called by Plato and others a "prophetess"; she is said to have taught through her oracular verses that there is "only one God." The author then provides three quotations of the Sibyl, one indicating that there is "only one unbegotten God" (cf. O. S. 3.11–12), another that the people who worship

idols have “strayed from the Immortal’s ways” since the idols are the “workmanship of our own hands, and images and figures of dead men” (cf. O.S. 3.721–73); and the other that people should worship the one great God and abjure all shrines, altars, idols, and sacrifices (cf. O.S. 4.24–30). It is striking that all three of the quotations are drawn from, or at least are very similar to, the Jewish, not the Christian, Sibyllina.

The discussion intensifies in chapters 37–38. Chapter 37 discusses the Sibyl but provides no oracular pronouncements. The Sibyl is said to have been of Babylonian extraction, the daughter of Berosus, author of the “Chaldean History.” She is said to have gone to the hot springs at Cumae; the author himself has actually seen, he says, the basilica where she bathed and prophesied. She was proclaimed a prophetess by Plato in the Phaedrus, and is one of those he refers to in the Meno who are clearly shown to be inspired by God when they speak in plain and manifest terms the truth about which they are personally unaware. Her prophecies were recorded by ignorant amanuenses, which is why the meter sometimes does not work. She herself, coming out of a trance, did not know what she had said.

This entire discussion is intended to establish the Sibyl as a completely trustworthy source. And what is it that she allegedly said? According to chapter 38, she predicted “in a clear and patent manner, the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ. She also taught that the gods of the idols have no real existence; and she uttered prophecies about the advent of Christ and the things he would do.”[78]

Here, then, the author is reliant on early Christian forms of the Oracula Sibyllina, thought to be utterances of a pagan priestess who prophesied the truth when in a state of ecstasy, inspired by the one true God.

An even more extensive use of the oracles of the Sibyl is found in the writings of Lactantius, especially the *Diviniae Institutiones*. Lactantius uses the Sibyl more than any other ecclesiastical writer, and in fact quotes Sibylline material 50 percent more often than he quotes the Old Testament. Unlike Pseudo-Justin, he does not provide long quotations, but only sentences here and there. Still, he cites hundreds of lines altogether. Lactantius shows that he is acquainted in particular with what became books 3–8. He quotes the text in order to discuss monotheism, everlasting life, the “fall,” the coming of the Son of God, his life and miracles, passion, resurrection and second coming, the last judgment, and the general resurrection. In particular, for Lactantius, the Sibyl is a prophetess who

foretold Christianity: “Since these events are true and certain of fulfillment, being in agreement with prophecies uttered by the seers, and since Trismegistus and Hystaspes and the Sibyls have foretold the same destinies, it is indisputable that all hope of life and salvation rests on the religion of God alone” (*Epitome Institutionum*, epilogue).[79] The apologetic function of the material could hardly be more patent.

A similar function can be found in the citation of the Sibyl in the forged Apostolic Constitutions: “But if the Gentiles laugh at us, and disbelieve our Scriptures, let at least their own prophetess Sibylla oblige them to believe, who says thus to them in express words:

> But when all things shall be reduced to dust and ashes
> And the immortal God who kindled the fire shall have quenched it
> God shall form those bones and that ashes into a man again,
> And shall place mortal men again as they were before.
> And then shall be the judgment, wherein God will do justice,
> And judge the world again. But as many mortals as have sinned through impiety
> Shall again be covered under the earth;
> But so many as have been pious shall live again in the world
> When God puts His Spirit into them, and gives those at once that are godly both life and favour
> Then shall all see themselves. (5.1.7)[80]

In a similar way Augustine declared in *The City of God* that the acrostic of book 8 was a genuine prophecy of Christ:

> It was at this same time, according to some accounts, that the Erythraean Sibyl made her predictions. Varro, we note, informs us that there were a number of Sibyls, not only one. This Sibyl of Erythraea certainly recorded some utterances which are obviously concerned with Christ…. This I discerned in conversations with that eminent man Flaccianus, who was, amongst other things, proconsul, a man of most ready eloquence and profound learning. We were talking about Christ, and he produced a Greek manuscript, saying that it was the poems of the Erythraean Sibyl. He showed

> me that in the manuscript the order of initial letters in one passage was so arranged as to form these words: IESOUS CHREISTOS THEOU UIOS SOTER, the translation of which is "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. (City of God, 18.23)[81]

He then quotes the acrostic poem.

Altogether, according to the statistics compiled by B. Thompson in a short but extremely useful article on the subject,[82] twenty-two Patristic sources preserve some eight hundred lines of the oracles. Clement of Alexandria, for example, quotes them eleven times, amounting to forty-six lines; Theophilus quotes a large portion of book 3, etc.

That Christians were particularly interested in the Sibyl and in the forged prophecies that supported the claims and theological views of their faith is especially evident in the charges occasionally leveled against them by pagans, that they had interpolated their own words into her writings. The first time we find the charge is in the Ἀληθὴς Λόγος of Celsus. After telling the well-known story of the Stoic Epictetus, who removed himself so far from his own suffering that he calmly explained to his master that he should not have broken his leg, Celsus asks why Jesus, if he were so great, did not react similarly:

> What comparable saying did your God utter while he was being punished? If you had put forward the Sibyl, whom some of you use, as a child of God you would have had more to be said in your favour. However, you have had the presumption to interpolate many blasphemous things in her verses, and assert that a man who lived a most infamous life and died a most miserable death was a god. (7.53)[83]

Origen's reply may have satisfied his Christian readers, but knowing what we do today about the composition of the Sibyllina Oracula, it seems, in fact, a bit wanting:

> Then for some unknown reason he wanted us to call the Sibyl a child of God rather than Jesus, asserting that we have interpolated many blasphemous things in her verses, though he does not give an

> instance of our interpolations. He would have proved this point had he showed that the older copies were purer and had not the verses which he supposes to have been interpolated. (7.56)

Although the charge of forgery is not found in (surviving) pagan attacks against Christians, it is referred in several other Christian sources that counter these attacks. A half century after Origen, Lactantius could claim, "Some, refuted by these testimonies, are accustomed to have recourse to the assertion that these poems were not by the Sibyls, but made up and composed by our own writers" (*Institutions*, 4.15.26).[84] Even more striking is the extensive discussion by none other than the Christian Constantine, in his "Oration to the Assembly of the Saints," preserved for us by Eusebius (assuming for the moment that the speech actually goes back to Constantine, an issue that does not much matter for my point).[85] The passage, though lengthy, deserves to be quoted in full, as it shows both the apologetic value of the Sibyl for the Christian cause and the pagan charge that the "predictions" in fact represented Christian forgeries:

> My desire, however, is to derive even from foreign sources a testimony to the Divine nature of Christ. For on such testimony it is evident that even those who blaspheme his name must acknowledge that he is God, and the Son of God if indeed they will accredit the words of those whose sentiments coincided with their own. The Erythraean Sibyl, then, who herself assures us that she lived in the sixth generation after the flood, was a priestess of Apollo, who wore the sacred fillet in imitation of the God she served, who guarded also the tripod encompassed with the serpent's folds, and returned prophetic answers to those who approached her shrine; having been devoted by the folly of her parents to this service, a service productive of nothing good or noble, but only of indecent fury, such as we find recorded in the case of Daphne. On one occasion, however, having rushed into the sanctuary of her vain superstition, she became really filled with inspiration from above, and declared in prophetic verses the future purposes of God; plainly indicating the advent of Jesus by the initial letters of these verses, forming an acrostic in these words: Jesus Christ, Son of God,

> Saviour, Cross. The verses themselves are as follows. (chs. 18–19)[86]

Constantine then provides a full quotation of the acrostic poem, and continues by refuting the charge of forgery:

> Many, however, who admit that the Erythraean Sibyl was really a prophetess, yet refuse to credit this prediction, and imagine that someone professing our faith, and not unacquainted with the poetic art, was the composer of these verses. They hold, in short, that they are a forgery, and alleged to be the prophecies of the Sibyl on the ground of their containing useful moral sentiments, tending to restrain licentiousness, and to lead man to a life of sobriety and decorum. Truth, however, in this case is evident, since the diligence of our countrymen has made a careful computation of the times; so that there is no room to suspect that this poem was composed after the advent and condemnation of Christ, or that the general report is false, that the verses were a prediction of the Sibyl in an early age. For it is allowed that Cicero was acquainted with this poem, which he translated into the Latin tongue, and incorporated with his own works.

Constantine, needless to say, was wrong about this.

Sibyllina Oracula as Counter-Forgeries

It is possible to see the Christian Sibylline Oracles—both those that survive (as interpolations of forgeries) and those quoted in patristic writers—not only as forgeries created for apologetic purposes, but specifically as counterforgeries. Among the weapons pagans used to oppose Christians were (forged) oracular pronouncements of their own, delivered with all the power of divine authority in the names, of course, of the pagan gods. And so, for example, Eusebius recounts an incident during the persecution of Maximin Daia, when a sheriff of Antioch named Theoctecnus forged an oracle to justify persecution of the Christians; he "displayed his magic arts by spurious oracular utterances…. This man aroused the demon against the

Christians: the god, he said, had commanded 'the emperor's enemies,' to be cleared right out of the city and its neighborhood" (*H.E*. 9.2–3).

Years later Augustine could claim that pagan opponents of Christianity "thought up some sort of Greek verses, supposedly the effusions of a divine oracle, given to someone consulting it," which indicated that Jesus' disciple Peter "used sorcery to ensure that the name of Christ should be worshipped for 365 years, and that on the completion of that number of years it should come to an immediate end." Augustine readily exposes the false claim of the oracle: the allotted amount of time had passed already, and the church was thriving more than ever (*City of God* 18.53). Later, in the same source, Augustine discusses Porphyry's *ΕΚ ΛΟΓΙΩΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ,* which mentioned an oracle of Apollo against the Christians. Augustine proffers the expected objection: "Is anyone so dense as to fail to realize that these oracles were either the inventions of a cunning man, a bitter enemy of the Christians, or the responses of demons devised with a like intent?" (19.23; see also 20.24 and 22.25).

If pagans were using forged oracles to oppose the Christians, is it any surprise that Christians responded in kind, by forging oracles of their own to defend themselves and their faith?[87] They could not forge oracles as having come from the gods of Greece and Rome, known to be either nonexistent or demonic. But an outlet existed in the person of the Sibyl, an actual human who went into a trance and under the power of inspiration delivered the truth of God. There is, in fact, a possible suggestion within the surviving Oracula Sibyllina themselves that Christians may have been inventing these texts as counterforgeries, in this case not against pagans but against Jews, who were known to have a good number of Sibylline oracles, as most of the surviving books derive ultimately from Jewish circles. The passage in question comes from Book 7:

> But they will endure extreme toil who, for gain
> Will prophesy base things, augmenting an evil time;
> Who putting on the shaggy hides of sheep
> Will falsely claim to be Hebrews, which is not their race.
> But speaking with words, making profit by woes,
> They will not change their life and will not persuade the righteous
> And those who propitiate God through the heart, most faithfully.
> (7.132–138)

Normally, the false "Hebrews" here are taken to be non-Jewish Christians of some kind. But might they, even more radically, be taken to be actual Jews, who, for Christians, were not in fact "true Jews," because by rejecting Christ they had rejected their own God? As this book itself says, in further attacking Jews: "Ah, Coele-Syria,… wretched one, you did not recognize your God, whom once Jordan washed in its streams" (7.64–67). And so, it should be at least considered possible that the forger of this part of book 7 produced his Christian interpolation precisely as a counter to the Jewish Sibylline prophecies that he saw here before him, which needed to be "corrected" in line with true religion.

THE LETTERS OF PAUL AND SENECA

As a final example of apologetic forgeries, we might consider the letters allegedly exchanged by Paul and the Roman philosopher Seneca. There are fourteen letters in this famous correspondence, eight of them from Seneca to Paul and six from Paul to Seneca. The first reference to the correspondence comes in Jerome's *De viris illustribus* (393 CE):

> Lucius Annaeus Seneca of Cordova, a disciple of the Stoic Sotion, and paternal uncle of the poet Lucan, was a man of very temperate life whom I would not place in a catalogue of saints, were it not that I was prompted to do so by those *Letters from Paul to Seneca* and *from Seneca to Paul* which are very widely read. In these, when Seneca was Nero's teacher and the most influential person of the period, he said that he wished to have the same position among his own [i.e., the pagans] which Paul had among the Christians. Two years before Peter and Paul were crowned with martyrdom, he was put to death by Nero. (*Vir. ill*. 12)[88]

Soon afterward Augustine mentions them: "Rightly did Seneca say, who lived at the time of the apostles, some of whose letters to the apostle Paul are still read" (*Epist*. 153. 14).[89] As A. Fürst notes, it is significant that the correspondence is not mentioned by Lactantius in the early fourth century.[90] This absence cannot simply be written off as an argument from silence; Lactantius frequently cites Seneca otherwise and highly evaluates him, and

had he known of the letters, and thought them authentic, he scarcely could have failed to cite them. In any event, the terminus ante quem for their appearance is 392 CE and plausibly they date from some decades before that, so, say, middle of the fourth century.[91] They were certainly composed in Latin, given, among other things, Seneca's castigation of Paul for his feeble Latinity.

That Paul and Seneca would have exchanged letters may have seemed altogether plausible to the fourth-century forger who created the correspondence and to the reading audience that eagerly accepted his work as authentic. The two great figures were contemporaries; both of them died in Rome. Paul appeared before Seneca's own brother, Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, in one of his trial scenes in Acts (18:12–17). Moreover, when the historical Paul sent forth greetings from prison (in Rome?) to the Philippians, he includes a salutation from "those of Caesar's household" (4:22), which could include any number of people, including Nero's then advisor, Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Moreover, it has long been noted, classically by J. B. Lightfoot, that there are many clear parallels between the authentic writings of the two authors, especially in their teachings on ethics.[92] That the two would have corresponded with one another may have seemed likely to ancient Christian readers, even if it appears completely out of the question for modern scholars.

The Character and Emphases of the Letters

The letters are filled with various verisimilitudes, as can be seen simply from the way the correspondence begins in letter 1:

> Seneca to Paul, greeting. I believe that you have been informed, Paul, of the discussion which my friend Lucilius and I held yesterday concerning the apocrypha and other matters: for some of the followers of your teachings were with me. We had retired to the gardens of Sallust, and it was our good fortune that these disciples whom I have mentioned saw us there and joined us, although they were on their way elsewhere. You may be sure that we wished that you, too, had been present….[93]

Many of the letters from Seneca are filled with praise of Paul. This undoubtedly relates to the reason they were written in the first place. And so, for example, from letter 1: "when we had read your book… we were completely refreshed. These thoughts, I believe, were expressed not by you, but through you…. For they are so lofty and so brilliant with noble sentiments that in my opinion generations of men could hardly be enough to become established and perfected in them." Or from letter 7: "For the holy spirit that is in you and high above you expresses with lofty speech thoughts worthy of reverence … I confess that Augustus was affected by your sentiments…. He was amazed that one whose education had not been normal could have such ideas."

In turn, Paul, somewhat less than humbly, accepts Seneca's praise and intimates that it is fully deserved: "I count myself fortunate in the approval of a man who is so great. For you, a critic, a philosopher, the teacher of so great a ruler, nay even of everyone, would not say this unless you spoke the truth" (letter 2).

At the same time, although Seneca is awed by the content of Paul's writings, he is more than a little underwhelmed by his lack of rhetorical style: "I do wish you would obey me and comply with the pure Latin style, giving a good appearance to your noble utterances, in order that the granting of this excellent gift may be worthily performed by you" (letter 13). In letter 9 he indicates that he has sent his correspondent a "book on elegance of expression," presumably a Latin equivalent of Strunk and White, to help Paul along in his writing.[94]

The most frequently commented aspect of this correspondence is its almost complete lack of substance, otherwise. There is very little content to the letters. The one exception is letter 11, where there is, finally, a good bit of meaty material and hints at courtly gossip, of a very serious nature. The letter discusses the fire in Rome and Nero's role in it. At the same time, because it is so different in conception, content, and style from the other letters, because it is dated out of sequence with the rest (occurring between letters dated 58 and 59 CE, even though it is given the date 64 CE), and because it has a completely different (negative) view of Nero from elsewhere in the correspondence, it is generally conceded to have come from another forger.[95] In any event, it provides the most "substance" of any of the letters. Seneca writes as follows:

> Do you think I am not saddened and grieved because you innocent people are repeatedly punished? Or because the whole populace believes you so implacable and so liable to guilt, thinking that every misfortune in the city is due to you?… The source of the frequent fires which the city of Rome suffers is plain … Christians and Jews, charged with responsibility for the fire—alas!—are being put to death, as is usually the case. The ruffian, whoever he is, whose pleasure is murdering and whose refuge is lying, is destined for his time of reckoning, and just as the best is sacrificed as one life for many, so he shall be sacrificed for all and burned by fire. One hundred thirty-two private houses and four thousand apartment-houses burned in six days; the seventh day gave respite.

The insipid character of the rest of the letters is the subject of frequent comment, as early as Erasmus: "I do not see how he could have made up these letters in a more feeble or inept fashion."[96] A nineteenth-century study by G. Boissier states: "Never has a clumsy forger made such great spirits speak more foolishly."[97] And the most recent lengthy analysis sums up the common view: "The noticeable peculiarity of the epistolary exchange between Seneca and Paul is the fact that content apparently does not matter; what matters are only the names of the correspondents."[98]

The Correspondence as Forgery

The Senecan correspondence was popular throughout the Middle ages; from the thirteenth century up to the sixteenth it was regularly included in the manuscripts of Seneca's writings. It has nonetheless been recognized as forged since the advent of historical criticism. Already Valla, in 1440, demonstrated its inauthenticity on stylistic grounds.[99] Erasmus, after commenting on the insipid character of the writings, cited above, went on to say "nonetheless, whoever was the author, he wrote so as to persuade us that Seneca had been a Christian."[100] Lightfoot expressed the matter with characteristic clarity: "The poverty of thought and style, the errors in chronology and history, and the whole conception of the relative positions of the Stoic philosopher and the Christian Apostle, betray clearly the hand

of a forger."[101] Only very few scholars, most of them Italian, have thought it possible that parts of the correspondence are authentic.[102]

But why would someone forge a set of letters with virtually no substance? We have seen another instance of the phenomenon in the Greek letter to the Laodiceans, and we would not be far afield to suspect that the reason for that cipher may apply to these as well: it was the fact of their existence that mattered, not the character of their contents. But that has not always been the explanation for the forged Senecan correspondence. For some time, the *opinio communis* was far more specific, as Harnack argued that the letters were produced for a concrete purpose, in order to commend Paul and his writings, or even the entire Bible, to recently converted fourth-century Christians of the educated classes, by showing an enthusiastic approbation by Seneca.[103] Fürst, however, shows the flaw in the reasoning: Seneca did not enjoy a high reputation among educated pagans of the fourth century, and his philosophy played virtually no role in the Neoplatonic thought world of late antiquity.[104]

An alternative was proposed by the editor of the first critical edition of the letters in 1938, Claude Barlow, who suggested that the simple, unadorned style of the letters indicates they may have originated as a rhetorical school exercise.[105] If they were that, however, one would have to judge that the student did not receive high marks, as the faux Senecan letters are striking precisely for their failure to approximate Seneca's elegant style. But the fatal blow to the view, attractive as it is on first sight, is that school exercises in rhetoric were by their nature designed to say something, to invent an imaginary substance as the topic of correspondence. That is precisely what is lacking here.

A more promising, but ultimately failed, proposal was floated by Bernhard Bischoff, who produced the editio princeps of a Latin letter recently discovered, in which a certain Annas (allegedly) wrote to Seneca condemning idolatry and pagan religion generally. This is a letter, in other words, that advances a kind of Jewish apologia. In fact, according to Bischoff, the Annas named in its title is to be seen as none other than Annas II, Jewish high priest for a short time in 62 CE, and so a contemporary of Seneca. Bischoff maintained that the letter was actually written in the fourth century, and he ascribed it specifically to a Jewish author because there are

(1) numerous parallels to the Wisdom of Solomon and (2) no specific Christian content.[106]

According to Bischoff, the existence of this Jewish letter cannot be thought of as unrelated to the Christian correspondence, also involving Seneca. One of the works may well have served as a motivating factor for the production of the other. In his provocative summary, Bischoff states:

> Since the possibility cannot be excluded that either the Christian author of the Seneca/Paul letters knew the Annas epistle, or that the Jewish author was aware of that fictional correspondence, one of the two fictional writings might be a counter-move against the other side's attempt to let the philosopher appear in conjunction with a representative of its own faith. If one considers content, the Annas letter may be able to lay claim to priority, which would suggest a fourth century date for its origin.[107]

This view found wide acceptance soon after its publication, for example by Wolfgang Wischmeyer and even, with some minor revisions, the great Arnaldo Momigliano.[108] Eventually, however, A. Hilhorst showed that it was completely implausible. Hilhorst provided a new critical edition of the letter of Annas with text-critical and interpretive notes, and a brief discussion of its character and origin. On one hand, Hilhorst expressed skepticism over whether the letter was to be thought of as addressed, originally, to Seneca. The incipit that mentions Seneca is not followed by an epistolary opening. A forger creating a letter to Seneca would surely place his name in the text. Instead the letter is addressed to "the brothers." The title of the work is therefore a later addition to the text and tells us nothing about the original design of its author.

Even more than that, Hilhorst insisted that the letter appears to be Christian rather than Jewish. "Fratres" in the address indicates co-religionists, not potential converts. And the term is quite common in specifically Christian writings. In addition, one has to deal with a specific set of historical probabilities. The reality is that we do not have a single prose writing from antiquity, in Latin, written by a Jewish author.[109] What then is the likelihood that this one letter would be the exception, when nothing in the letter would prevent it from being seen as Christian? As

Hilhorst states his case: "If I am right that there is no intrinsic evidence that the *Epistola* was written by a Jew any more than by a Christian, then it is reasonable to attribute this text to an environment in which all other a Latin writings of this kind originate, that is, Christianity."[110]

Hilhorst's view has been forcefully supported, with additional arguments by Rainer Jakobi,[111] who among other things points out that Christian authors such as Justin, Clement of Alexandria, and Lactantius made abundant use of the Wisdom of Solomon, that a number of the arguments of the letter can be found in the works of Christian writers, and that there do indeed appear to be Christian allusions in the text. In particular, the author appears to know Lactantius, the Vulgate, and the commentary on Isaiah by Jerome. All this provides us with the religious identity of the author and his date: the author is a Christian and he is writing after Jerome's commentary, that is, sometime soon after 410 CE.

More than that, the Annas of the incipit is not meant to be a reference to the high priest. The letter is allegedly by Annaei Senecae, created by someone already familiar with the Paul-Seneca correspondence. The letter is written to show that the great stoic philosopher had a highly enlightened view of religion and that he anticipated the attacks on pagan idolatry to be popularized by Christian apologists a century after his day.

If then the letters of Paul and Seneca can be explained adequately by none of the options cited above, we might return to the suggestion made earlier, which in fact is the most common view of the matter. The letters function—by the very fact that they exist—as a kind of Christian apologia. The background to their construction can plausibly be reconstructed as follows. It was widely "known" in the fourth century that there had been no connections between Paul and the great minds of his day ("knowledge" based on the available sources on Paul, such as the book of Acts and the various legends incorporated in the Acts of Paul). Moreover, his style of writing, and even the extent of his learning, were open to suspicion.[112] Naturally questions arose: Was the great apostle to the gentiles really so great? Why was he not more significant historically? Why was he not connected with other major thinkers of the time? Why are his writings not more weighty intellectually and polished stylistically? A forger produced the correspondence with Seneca to answer these questions, and very little substance was required to achieve that end. Paul was known and adored by the greatest philosopher of his day, who considered his ideas divinely

inspired, all the more so since his inferior writing style showed that he did not learn his message through rigorous academic training. It must have come, then, straight from God. Even the Roman emperor was amazed at Paul's learning.

And so, as Stefan Krauter has recently observed, the letters of Paul and Seneca may seem insipid and disappointing to modern readers who hope to find some substance in them—for example, of the relationship of Stoic and Christian thought—or at least some good imperial gossip. But the letters should not be criticized on these grounds. The various anachronisms and fissures of the correspondence are there simply because the author had little vested interest in doing anything other than showing that Paul and Seneca exchanged letters in which Paul was praised.[113] A similar view is taken by the most exhaustive recent analysis of Fürst:

> The text is crafted from conventions and phrases that are commonplace in late ancient epistolography. With these simple means, garnished with several splendid ideas, the author generates the one impression that was apparently his aim, namely that Seneca and Paul were supposedly friends…. The letters desire nothing further but to show by means of the chosen genre that Seneca and Paul had contact with one another.[114]

The driving force behind the association of Paul with Seneca in particular is that even though Seneca was not an important figure in pagan literary circles at the time,[115] he was indeed important to a range of Latin theologians, starting with Tertullian, who approvingly speaks of "Seneca saepe noster" (*De anima* 20.1), and moving through Lactantius up to Jerome, who numbered Seneca among the saints. His philosophy may have played little role in the development of Christian thought, but his person was considered important. So too with these letters: it is their existence as encomia on Paul, more than their contents, that matter.

The long-range effect was significant, for both Paul and Seneca. Paul hereafter was seen as closely connected with the greatest mind of his day, who praised him for his divinely inspired thought, and Seneca's status among Christians was elevated by his association with Paul. The letters

came to be included as standard fare among the manuscripts of the writings of Seneca down to the invention of printing.

1. For recent works on the early Christian apologists, see Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes grecs du II^e^ siècle* (Paris: de Cerf, 2005); and Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Still worth reading as backdrop to the apologetic movement is the classic of Pierre de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne: étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du I^er^ au VI^e^ siècle* (Paris: L'artisan du Livre, 1934). For a recent, interesting attempt to limit the genre of the "apology" strictly, as a form introduced by Justin and perfected but brought to an end by Tertullian, see Sara Parvis, "Justin Martyr and the Apologetic Tradition," in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), pp. 115–27. For my purposes here, "apologetic forgeries" refers not to forgeries necessarily in the literary form, or genre, of "apologia," but to forgeries that function apologetically.

2. Here I leave to the side the question of whether Christian apologiae were meant to convince outsiders, or to provide insiders with ammunition for their debates with others. I subscribe to the latter view, but the issue does not affect the questions I will be addressing throughout the chapter.

3. For earlier discussion of Acts, see pp. 263–82.

4. For an exception, see Acts 19.

5. See discussion on pp. 239–59.

6. See the discussion on pp. 350–58.

7. The bewildering array of long and explanatory titles found in the manuscripts include such niceties as "Narrative and History Concerning How the Very Holy Mother of God was Born for Our Salvation" (Tischendorf ms C); or "Narrative of the Holy Apostle James, the Archbishop of Jerusalem and Brother of God, Concerning the Birth of the All Holy Mother of God and Eternal Virgin Mary" (ms A). Our earliest manuscript, Bodmer V of the third or fourth century, simply calls it "The Birth of Mary, the Revelation of James."

8. See Edouard Cothenet, "Le Protévangile de Jacques: origen, genre et signification d'un premier midrash chrétien sur la Nativité de Marie," *ANRW* 2.25.6 (1988): 4252–69.

9. The book survives in some 150 Greek manuscripts and a range of eastern versions: Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, and Slavonic.

0. *De perpetua virginitate beatae Mariae adversus Helvidium*.

1. Letter 6 to Exuperius of Toulous 7.30.

2. See the extensive collations of manuscripts in two unpublished Duke University dissertations: B. Daniels, "The Greek Manuscript Tradition of the Protevangelium Jacobi" (1956); and George Zervos, "Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Genesis Marias (Protevangelium Jacobi): The Greek Manuscripts" (1986).

3. Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1958 [original 1897]), 2: 598–603.

4. Emile de Strycker, *La Forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1961).

5. Ronald Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1995). pp. 14–20.

6. Translations taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 31–71.

7. Thus, in his commentary on the book, H. Smid states the obvious conclusion: "The author of PJ poses as James, the step(brother) of Jesus. The object of this identification is to make his story that of an eyewitness, able to complete the account in all 'necessary' points, on the basis of Matt 1 and 2 and Luke 1 and 2." Harm R. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi: A Commentary* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1965), p. 168.

8. See, for example, Albert Frey, "Protévangile de Jacques," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 1, ed. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), pp. 73–80; P. A. Van Stempvoort, "The Protevangelium Jacobi, the Sources of its Theme and Style and their Bearing on its Date," in SE, pp. 413–15; Cothenet, "Le Protévangelium," p. 4257; and Smid, *Protevangelium*, pp. 15–17: "It is probable that P.J. is a direct reply to the accusation of Celsus, at any rate to a similar indictment" (p. 16).

9. *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 20.

0. Translations taken from Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*.

1. See the discussion in ibid. (p. 31, n. 3), in reference for example to Tosephta Hullin, 11.22–23. For a fuller listing of passages, see Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), pp. 534–37.
2. This is an option suggested, for example, by Cothenet (cf. Justin *Dialogue* 48), "Le Protévangile," p. 4257.
3. It is not altogether clear that Tertullian and the later heresiologists who deal with the matter are right to think that Marcion truncated Luke by eliminating the offensive opening two chapters. It is equally plausible that the text of Luke inherited by Marcion in the early second century lacked the chapters, and that they were added only later. But it was widely *thought* among the proto-orthodox that Marcion took his penknife to these chapters, and this is all that matters for the present argument.
4. For a supporter of this view, see John L. Allen, "The Protevangelium of James as an Historia: The Insufficiency of the Infancy Gospel Category." SBLSP 30 (1991): 508–17.
5. Although one could still imagine a specifically anti-Marcionite polemic, as the account makes plain that Jesus came into the world as a child born (in some sense) of Mary, not as an adult descended straight from heaven.
6. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 362.
7. Translation from ibid.
8. On the use of διά to designate the letter carrier, see above, pp. 248–49.
9. R. A. Lipsius, "Der Märtyrertod Polykarps," *ZWT* 17 (1874): 188–214.
0. Theodor Keim, *Aus dem Urchristenthum: geschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Zurich: Orell Fsli, 1878), pp. 126–32.
1. Ibid., p. 132.
2. Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, "Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarpmartyriums," *SHAW. PH* (1957): 5–48.
3. E.g., H. I. Marrou in *TLZ* 84 (1959): 361–63.
4. "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 543.
5. B. Dehandschutter, "The Martyrium Polycarpi: A Century of Research," *ANRW* 2.27. 1 (Berlin: New York: de Gruyter, 1993), p. 494.
6. See, e.g., ibid. Victor Saxer, "L'authenticité du 'Martyre de Polycarpe': Bilan de 25 ans de critique," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Antiquité* 94 (1982): 979–1001; Gerd Buschmann, *Martyrium Polycarpi—*

eine formkritische Studie. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung der Gattung Märtyrerakte, BZNW 70 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 15–70.

7. "Polycarp of Smyrna and Ignatius of Antioch," *ANRW* 2.27.1 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1993), pp. 353–54.
8. *Indagine sul martirio di San Policarpo: Critica storica e fortuna agiografica di un caso giudiziario in Asia Minore* (Nuovi Studi Storici, 6; Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1990).
9. See, for example, Dennis Trout in *Spec* 68 (1993): 251–53; T.D. Barnes, *JTS* 43 (1992): 237–38; and esp. Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer, "Notiunculae Martyrologicae V" *VC* 49 (1995): 146–64. Den Boeft and Bremmer in particular stress that the late date does not account for details in the text that make better sense with a second-century dating. They do not consider the possibility that such indicators of an early date could just as easily have been passed down orally in the accounts of Polycarp's death, before the account was written many years later.
0. The first person recurs later in the account as well, in the adoration of the martyr's relics, which I will address later.
1. *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii*, HDR, 22 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 121.
2. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts*.
3. Moss, "Dating," pp. 549–50.
4. T. D. Barnes, "A Note on Polycarp," *JTS* n.s. 18 (1967): 436.
5. "Dating," p. 562.
6. "L'autenticité du Martyre de Polycarpe."
7. Moss, "Dating," p. 567.
8. Ibid., p. 566. Moss also argues that the text provides an "apologia for the absence of relics." Strictly speaking, however, this is not true, since the bones in fact are the relics, even if the other parts of the body no longer survived.
9. See den Boeft and Bremmer in note 39.
0. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. He includes twenty-eight of the accounts that he considers "the most reliable" or at least "extremely important and instructive"; p. xii.
1. *Pre-Decian Acts*. Bisbee's approach involves ascertaining whether some kind of (actual) historical commentarius lies behind each of the respective

Acts.

2. There have occasionally been scholars who have wanted to claim that the famous persecution in Lyons and Vienne in the days of Marcus Aurelius was made up by an imaginative Christian author out of whole cloth. See, for example, James Westfall Thompson, "The Alleged Persecution of the Christians at Lyons in 177," *AJT* 16 (1912): 359–84. The article was savaged by Harnack, *TLZ* 3 (1913): 74–77; and M. Paul Allard, *Revue des questions historiques* (1913): 53–67. Thompson attempted a lengthy and rather defensive response in *AJT* 17 (1913), 249–58. I will not provide an analysis here because, even though the account contains first-person narrative, it is not clear to me that this is an authorial ploy. Winrich Löhr, "Der Brief der Gemeinden von Lyon und Vienne (Eusebius, h.e. V, 1–2(4))," *Oecumenica et patristica*, 1989, pp. 135–149, argues that the letter was not forged, but that it does contain literary elements to combine fact with fiction, in particular in an attempt to theologize the conflict as one between God and Satan, to stress the opposition to Montanism, and to create literary tension and drama and to highlight the character of those martyred, over against those who caved in.
3. "On the Origin of the Soul," 1.12. Translation of Peter Holmes and Robert E. Wallis, *NPNF*, first series, vol. 5.
4. See, recently, J. N. Bremmer, "Perpetua and Her Diary: Authenticity, Family, and Visions," in W. Ameling, ed., *Märtyrer und Märtyrerakten* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002), pp. 77–120.
5. Thomas J. Heffernan, "Philology and Authorship in the *Passio Sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis," Traditio* 50 (1995): 315–25.
6. Ibid., p. 320.
7. Ibid., p. 322.
8. See, for example, Ross Kraemer and Shira L. Lander, "Perpetua and Felicitas," in Philip Esler, ed., *The Early Christian World*, vol. 2, Routledge Worlds Series (London: Taylor & Francis, 2000), pp. 1048–65, who assert that there are "myriad" problems in the account, although they mention only a few. In particular, they note that the only contemporaneous evidence for Perpetua outside the Passio is Tertullian, who mentions her in passing and without referring to either a text or a commemoration; it is not, in fact, until the fourth century that text and commemoration are secured, starting with the liturgical Calendar of Rome in 354 and the comments of

Augustine. Most striking are the parallels evidenced between the specifics of the Passio and the "prophecy" of Joel 2:28–29 (cf. Acts 2:17–18), where sons and daughters are said to prophesy, the spirit is poured out, the young see visions, and the old dream dreams.

9. Musurillo, *Christian Martyrs*, p. xxix. For a recent study, which deals with some of the problems of the eyewitness claims and the possibility that the account preserves some historical information, see E. Leigh Gibson, "Jewish Antagonism or Christian Polemic: The Case of the Martyrdom of Pionius," *JECS* 9 (2001) 339–58.

0. Translation taken from Musurillo, *Christian Martyrs*.

1. Ibid., xxxv.

2. Translations taken from ibid.

3. Thus ibid., p. xxxv.

4. *Apostolic Fathers*, 2.2, 383–90.

5. As admitted by Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts*, pp. 146–49.

6. For these arguments, see Lightfoot and Bisbee, as cited in notes 64 and 41.

7. Translation taken from Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts*.

8. Translation of John J. Collins, "Sybilline Oracles," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *OTP*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

9. See John J. Collins, "The Development of the Sibylline Tradition," *ANRW* II.20.1 (1987): 421–59 and esp. H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy*, on which the following précis depends.

0. The textual tradition is complex. For this and all other "introduction" issues involving dating, redaction, and structure, see Collins, "Development."

1. "Sibylline Oracles," p. 332.

2. *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina* (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 190), pp. 38–46.

3. Collins, pp. 315–16.

4. Sodom represents Jerusalem in Rev. 11:8.

5. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," pp. 408–9.

6. John G. Gager, "Some Attempts to Label the Oracula Sibyllina Book 7," *HTR* 65 (1972): 91–97.

7. See pp. 34–35.

8. Translation of M. Dods, *ANF*, vol. 2.
9. Translation of E. H. Blakeney, *Firmiani Lactantii Epitome Institutionum Divinarum/Lactantius' Epitome of the Divine Institutes* (London: SPCK, 1950), 123.
0. Translation of Collins, "Sybilline Oracles," p. 322.
1. Translation of Henry Bettenson, *St Augustine, Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans* (Pengain Books, 1972), 788–89. All subsequent quotations of this work will come from this edition.
2. Bard Thompson, "Patristic Use of the Sibylline Oracles," *RR* 16 (1952): 115–36.
3. Translation of H. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, p. 440.
4. Translation of William Fletcher in *ANF*, vol. 7.
5. On the authenticity of the speech, see Hal Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 293:

> Its authenticity questioned during an earlier period of hypercriticism (during which scholars freely dismissed whole passages for not conforming to what their science told them the emperor should have said), it then became cautiously admitted as a representative piece of fourth-century propaganda, though still held unlikely to be Constantine's own. Recent scholars have been more willing to concede authenticity, although the enthusiastic identification of parallels in other writers such as Lactantius was beginning to sound like yet another search for alternative authors until T. D. Barnes came to the sensible conclusion that words delivered by the emperor, no matter who wrote them, could safely be considered to be the emperor's own.

I owe this reference to Maria Doerfler.

6. Translation of Ernest C. Richardson, *NPNF*, Second Series, vol. 1.
7. For other examples, including Diocletian's appeal to the oracle of Didyma (Eusebius, *de vita Const*. 2.50–51; Lactantius, *De mort. pers*., 11.7), see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 250–51.
8. Translation of Thomas Halton, *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men* (FC 100; Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1999), pp. 20–22.
9. Translation mine.

0. Alfons Fürst et al., *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), pp. 6–7.

1. A more precise date was unsuccessfully attempted by Édmond Liénard, who notes that there are many parallels between the correspondence and the letters of the Roman senator Quintus Aurelius Symmachus (345–402 CE). Liénard argues, then, that the letters were written just a few years before Jerome attests to their existence. "Sur la Correspondance Apocryphe de Sénèque et de Saint-Paul," *RBPH* 11 (1932): 5–23. Fürst has demonstrated the problem with this line of argumentation: the letters, in fact, have numerous points of contact and parallels with a good number of other fourth-century letter writers as well, and simply conform in many ways to the rhetorical conventions of the time (*Der apocryphe Briefwechsel*, pp. 7–8).

2. See Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1869), pp. 268–331.

3. Translations taken from Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*.

4. There exists some evidence that highly trained pagan authors generally considered Paul's letters a bit barbaric. See Zahn, *Geschichte* 2, 2, 620–21; Harnack *Geschichte*, 1, 763–65; E. Bickel, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der römischen Literatur* 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1961), 15.226–27.

5. Thus, most recently, Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, p. 112.

6. "His epistolis non video quid fingi possit frigidius aut ineptius," *Epistola* 2092.

7. "Jamais plus maladroit faussaire n'a fait plus sottement parler d'aussi grands esprits." G. Boissier, "Le Christianisme de Sénèque," *Revue des deux mondes* 92 (1871): 43. I owe this reference to my student Pablo Molina.

8. "Die auffällige Eigenheit des Briefwechsels zwischen Seneca und Paulus ist die, dass es in ihm offenbar gar nicht um Inhalte geht, sondern um die Namen der Korrespondenten und nur um diese"; Fürst, *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel*, p. 11.

9. L. D. Reynolds and H. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 142.

00. "et tamen quisquis fuit auctor, hoc egit ut nobis persuaderet Senecam fuisse Christianum."

01. *Philippians*, p. 271.

02. See Ilaria Ramelli, “L’epistolario apocrifo Seneca-san Paolo: alcune osservazioni,” *VetChr* 34 (1997): 299–310.

03. Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, vol. 1 (Lepizig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893), p. 765; see also Theodore Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* II/2 (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1892), p. 621.

04. Fürst, *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel*, p. 17.

05. Claude Barlow, *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam (quae vocantur*) (Horn, Austria: F. Berger, 1938).

06. “Der Brief des Hohenpriesters Annas an den Philosophen Seneca—eine jüdisch-apologetische Missionsschrift (Viertes Jahrhundert?),” in *Anecdota Novissima: Texte des vierten bis sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*. (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1984), pp. 1–9.

07. “Da nicht auszuschließen ist, daß entweder dem christlichen Verfasser der Seneca-Paulus-Briefe die Annas-Epistel oder dem jüdischen Autor jene fiktive Korrespondenz bekannt war, kann eine der beiden Fiktionen ein Gegenzug gegen den Versuch der anderen Seite sein, den Philosophen in Verbindung mit einem Repräsentanten ihrers Glaubens erscheinen zu lassen. Wägt man den Inhalt ab, so dürfte die Priorität bei dem Annas-Brief liegen, was für seine Entstehung im IV. Jahrhundert sprechen würde”; P. 5.

08. Wolfgang Wischmeyer, “Die Epistula Anne ad Senecam: Eine jüdische Missionsschrift des lateinischen Bereichs,” in *Juden und Christen in der Antike*, ed. J. Van Amersfoort and J. van Oort (Kampen: Kok, 1990), pp. 72–93; Arnaldo Momigliano, “The New Letter by ‘Anna’ to ‘Seneca’” *Athenaeum* n.s. 63.1–2 (1985): 217–19. For Momigliano, the author of the letter was indeed a Jew. But, he points out, even though the incipit mentions Seneca, the letter itself is addressed to fratres. The name Seneca is therefore a “secondary interpolation” possibly made by a Jewish editor; the edited form of the letter then became the incentive for a somewhat later Christian writer to forge the correspondence of Paul and Seneca.

09. A. Hilhorst notes that there are some Jewish inscriptions in Latin that survive, but they almost never demonstrate any literary pretensions. “The *Epistola Anne ad Senecam:* Jewish or Christian?” in G. J. M. Bartelink et al., ed., *Eulogia*. Festschrift A. A. R. Bastiansen (Steenbrugge: Abbatia S. Petri, 1991), pp. 147–61.

10. P. 161. It should be noted that this argument could be circumvented if it were shown that the letter is a Latin translation of a Greek original; but there appears to be no evidence that this is the case.
11. *Die sogenannte 'Epistula Anne ad Senecam'* (Torun: Wydawn, Uniwersytetu Mikolaja Kopernika, 2001).
12. On his style, see note 94 above.
13. Stefan Krauter, "Was ist 'schlechte' Pseudepigraphie? Mittel, Wirkung und Intention von Pseudepigraphie in den Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 765–85
14. Der Text ist gebastelt aus Konventionen und Phrasen, wie sie in der spätantiken Epistolographie gang und gäbe sind. Mit diesen schlichten Mitteln, garniert mit einigen famosen Einfällen, erzeugt der Autor den einzigen Eindruck, der offenbar vermittelt werden soll, dass nämlich Seneca und Paulus Freunde gewesen sein sollen.... Die Briefe wollen nichts weiter, als mittels der gewählten Gattung demonstrieren, dass Seneca und Paulus miteinander Kontakt hatten"; *Der apocryphe Briefwechsel*, pp. 3, 12.
15. See p. 523 above.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Lies and Deception in the Cause of Truth

I have come to the end of my study and can now summarize my findings in a few words. I will then conclude by examining the one major issue I have not yet addressed at any length. Throughout the study we have seen that forgery was widely considered a form of literary deceit. But we have not considered the ethics of the practice. In the early Christian tradition, were there circumstances in which literary deceit may have been considered acceptable? That is to say, how would forgery have been evaluated in early Christianity as a moral, or immoral, practice?

SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION OF OUR FINDINGS

Arguably the most striking finding of my study is the most basic. In the early centuries of the church Christians produced a large number of literary forgeries. We have considered some fifty examples from the first four Christian centuries. Many of these are highly significant historically and culturally. Among the earliest surviving writings of the Christians—those that make up the New Testament—nearly half (13/27) are forged.[1]

I have restricted my study, with only a couple of minor exceptions, to the forgeries that have survived in manuscript tradition and that are tied closely to the polemical agendas of the early Christians in their various internecine and extramural struggles. We know, of course, of other forgeries that do not survive but that were, at one time, known and discussed.[2] Moreover, toward the end of our period forgeries continued apace, especially with the sea-change that came with the conversion of Constantine and the proliferation of writings of all sorts among Christian intellectuals. Sometimes these later forgeries involved shenanigans connected with important figures in the theological and ecclesiastical life of the church of the fourth century. Such is the case with a no-longer surviving letter forged for unfriendly purposes in the name of Athanasius, as he himself tells us in a letter he wrote to Constantius in opposition to Arian opponents:

> I am sure you will be astonished at the presumption of my enemies. Montanus, the officer of the Palace, came and brought me a letter, which purported to be an answer to one from me, requesting that I might go into Italy, for the purpose of obtaining a supply of the deficiencies which I thought existed in the condition of our Churches. Now I desire to thank your Piety, which condescended to assent to my request, on the supposition that I had written to you, and has made provision for me to undertake the journey, and to accomplish it without trouble. But here again I am astonished at those who have spoken falsehood in your ears. … For I never wrote to you, nor will my accuser be able to find any such letter. (*Apol. ad const*. 19)[3]

Years later, Jerome describes a malicious letter, no longer extant, written to castigate his intentions in performing his translation work:

> My brother Eusebius writes to me that, when he was at a meeting of African bishops which had been called for certain ecclesiastical affairs, he found there a letter purporting to be written by me, in which I professed penitence and confessed that it was through the influence of the press in my youth that I had been led to turn the Scriptures into Latin from the Hebrew; in all of which there is not a word of truth. When I heard this, I was stupefied.… Letters were soon brought me from many brethren in Rome asking about this very matter, whether the facts were as was stated: and they pointed in a way to make me weep to the person by whom the letter had been circulated among the people. He who dared to do this, what will he not dare to do? It is well that ill will has not a strength equal to its intentions. Innocence would be dead long ago if wickedness were always allied to power, and calumny could prevail in all that it seeks to accomplish. It was impossible for him, accomplished as he was, to copy any style and manner of writing, whatever their value may be; amidst all his tricks and his fraudulent assumption of another man's personality, it was evident who he was. It is this same man, then, who wrote this fictitious letter of retractation in my name, making out that my translation of the Hebrew books was bad, who, we now hear, accuses me of having translated the Holy

> Scriptures with a view to disparage the Septuagint.… I wonder that in this letter he did not make me out as guilty of homicide, or adultery or sacrilege or parricide or any of the vile things which the silent working of the mind can revolve within itself.[4] (*Adv. Rufin. 2, 24*)

Examples could be multiplied.[5]

In addition to restricting myself to works that survive, I have focused on just one kind of early Christian forgery, those written in the context of early Christian polemics—whether internal struggles among various Christian groups trying to establish, in the face of opposing views, what Christians should believe or how they should live, attacks on Jews and Judaism, or apologia in the face of pagan assault. I have not considered non-polemical forgeries, and so have left out of our examination, for example, a number of Nag Hammadi treatises such as the Apocryphon of John, The Gospel of Philip, or the two Apocalypses of James. These do indeed use a pseudonym to advance a particular understanding of the religion (and to that extent are obviously arguing against alternative perspectives), but they are not especially polemical in their content or rhetoric.

As it turns out, however, the majority of our early Christian forgeries do in fact appear to have been generated out of a polemical context. The reason has to do with much larger issues in the development of the Christian religion, which I will mention here in only very brief compass. As is widely recognized, Christianity—by which I mean all the various groups of devotees who paid allegiance to Christ in one way or another, and considered themselves to be his followers—was distinctive in the Roman world in a number of ways. As opposed to followers of other religions, most Christian groups were exclusivistic in their views, maintaining that they had the "true" understanding of the faith (whether they were Sethian, Valentinian, Thomasine, Marcionite, Ebionite, Proto-orthodox, or something else), and that knowing the truth was in fact the key to practicing true religion. Christians ("true" Christians of whatever variety) were right, and everyone else was in error. Conversion was required, and conversion meant abandoning one's old religion, whether that was some form of Judaism, one of the many hundreds (thousands) of "pagan" cults, an "aberrant" Christian sect, etc. A person had to believe the "right" things to

be on the right side of God, from the very beginning of the Christian movement.

If being right mattered, then accepting the right teachings mattered. But how was one to know the right teachings when there were so many alternative views available, not just within the Christian movement, but competing with it from the outside? Authorities were needed. Authorities who could speak the truth from God. And so there developed the notion of apostolic succession. God sent Christ, who chose his apostles, who spoke the truth and passed it along to their hand-selected successors. But what happens when Christianity spread, and there were very few people left who actually knew the successors of the apostles? In one strain of thought, apostolic succession was carried down to and through the bishops of the main churches, who could be trusted to convey the apostolic teachings learned from Jesus who was sent from God. Another way to get back to the apostles was by reading the writings they had produced. Apostolic writings then became the order of the day. Even apostles of Jesus who, in real life, could not have written a paragraph in Greek had their souls depended upon it—Simon Peter, James the brother of Jesus, and John the Son of Zebedee, for example—had writings attributed to them. Many of these writings were produced by later authors who could not possibly have had any real connection with the apostles. They wrote forgeries, but they did so no doubt —at least in their own views—for good causes. The apostolic truth needed apostolic authority, and that required the use of an apostolic name. This was deceit in service of the truth.

Later still, other (non-apostolic) Christian leaders came to be cherished as authority figures: Clement of Rome, for example, or Ignatius of Antioch, and eventually Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom. And so sundry authors claimed those names as well for their own writings, lying about their identities to get their views heard. It happened a lot.

That, then, is one set of theses that I have tried to establish in the preceding chapters. Forgery occurred to a notable extent and it involved both well-known names and historically important writings, including a large number that became Scripture. As subsidiary theses I have tried to show that explanations for the phenomenon that at times seem ubiquitous, especially among Neutestamentlers, lack compelling evidence and are almost certainly wrong. This includes the claim that it was common practice in philosophical schools for students to write treatises in the names

of their teachers, with impunity, as an act of humility, and the assertion that letters written in the names of such stalwarts as Peter and Paul can best be explained as having been produced by secretaries or coauthors, rather than the apostles themselves.

One other overarching conclusion is the corollary: forgery was indeed understood in antiquity to be a form of lying and deceit. This is seen not only in the negative terms used to describe writings produced by an author falsely claiming to be someone else, such as νόθα (bastards) and ψευδεπίγραφα (writings inscribed with a lie). It is also seen in the extensive discourse surrounding the activity, which castigated it as a form of lying. The true nature of these false writings was clearly recognized, as we have seen, by the greatest scholar of ancient forgery, Wolfgang Speyer, in words that bear repeating: "Every forgery feigns a state of affairs that does not correspond to actual events. In this vein, forgery belongs in the realm of lie and deceit." … "Only where the intent to deceive—that is to say: dolus malus—exists, does [a work] attain to the status of forgery. Forgery thus belongs in the same category as the lie, indeed as the intentional lie."[6]

I should stress again that forgery is not—and was not–simply an ancient form of transparent "fiction." The authors of forgery in almost every known instance meant to deceive their readers and the vast majority of times they appear to have succeeded. And so, "fiction" is not at all the right designation for this kind of practice.[7] Both in antiquity and today "fiction,"[8] involves a kind of contract between the author and the reader, in which the requirement of factual reporting is, by mutual assent, suspended. To revert to the helpful explanation of Michael Wood:

> Fiction is pure invention, any sort of fabrication. It is invention which knows it is invention; or which knows *and says* it is invention; or which, whatever it knows and says, *is known* to be invention. It is permissible or noble lying, licensed under quite specific cultural circumstances, and displays (sometimes) the linguistic or textual marks of its license. It is not lying at all, but exempt from all notions of truth and falsehood, licensed in quite a different way. …[9]

That is not what we are dealing with when considering forgeries. The reports of and discussions about the practice in antiquity consistently show that in fact there was no agreement between author and reader for the assumption of a false name. Instead, forgery was seen as a form of lying meant to deceive. As such it was closely related to other literary practices that we have mentioned only in passing throughout this study[10]: plagiarism,[11] falsification,[12] fabrication,[13] and false attribution.[14]

It is important at this stage to stress that even though I have insisted throughout the study that forgery is a form of literary deception, only in passing, at the outset, have I addressed the question of whether or not this kind of lying was ever considered morally acceptable. That, of course, is a different issue altogether.

Any normative evaluation of literary deceit should be the work of ethicists or, possibly, theologians—not historians. But the historian does have the obligation to consider how such activities would have been perceived in their own day. As it turns out, the (ancient) moral evaluation of lying is complicated, as might be expected when dealing with Christian authors who urge their readers to tell the truth, after lying about their own identity.[15] To make sense of this situation we need to consider the attitudes to lying and deception in the early church.

LIES AND DECEPTION IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The question about whether lies could be deemed moral was entertained by Speyer:

> As noted already, it is the intent to deceive that lies beyond any particular literary purpose that makes a pseudepigraphon a forgery. Forgery and lie agree in this regard, that they conceal the real situation and give the appearance of truth to a non-existent state of affairs. To this end, they use the means of dissimulation. Literary forgery is thus a special case of the lie, or rather: of deceit. This relationship between literary forgery and lie does not appear, however, to have been examined closely in antiquity or the modern era.… We must ask, however, whether in antiquity any lie would

> have been judged unethical, or whether there were differentiations, and deception was considered permissible in certain cases.[16]

To ask what ancient persons—even orthodox Christians among the highly educated literary elite—thought about lying would be like asking this question of modern people. It depends on whom you ask. For the purposes of this sketch, I will map out two of the extreme positions, the well-known Augustinian view that it was never, ever right to lie, about anything, at any time, for any reason, whatsoever, and the lesser known but (at the time) more popular view represented by his contemporary John Cassian, that in fact there were instances where lying was not only acceptable but in fact the right thing to do.[17]

Augustine's Views of Lying

Augustine's views of lying can be found scattered throughout his writings, but come to clearest expression in his two treatises devoted to the subject, *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*.[18] The overarching point is the same in both treatises: under no circumstances is it permissible for a Christian to lie. You can imagine the most extreme position you want—that a white lie may prevent someone from being raped and tortured to death—and it is still not right to lie, no matter what.

De mendacio and Contra mendacium

De mendacio provides a long and nuanced discussion of what a lie actually is, followed by the question of whether it is ever appropriate or permissible for a Christian to tell a lie. For Augustine, a lie is the intentional discrepancy between what a person thinks to be true (whether or not she is right) and the contrary thing she says. A person "lies … who holds one opinion in his mind and who gives expression to another through words or any other outward manifestation" (ch. 3).[19] As Paul Griffiths puts it, for Augustine the mark of a *mendacium* is duplicity: that is, "a fissure between thought and utterance that is clearly evident to the speaker as she speaks. Lying words are spoken precisely with the intent to create such a fissure." So the speaker of the lie, the *mendax* has to believe that what she is saying is false, and to be intentionally saying it anyway (whether or not it really is

false is beside the point).[20] Or more simply: "For Augustine, the lie is deliberately duplicitous speech, insincere speech that deliberately contradicts what its speaker takes to be true."[21]

Augustine is well aware of instances in the Bible where important figures lie with apparent approbation: Sarah and Jacob in Genesis, the Egyptian midwives at the beginning of Exodus. But he insists that these passages demand a figurative, not a literal, interpretation; and he finds no lies among Jesus or his followers in the New Testament. In his view, not only is there no biblical warrant for lying; there is no warrant whatsoever. He gets to this point by a kind of argumentum ad absurdum: no one would commend fornication in order to attain a greater good; and lying is condemned in Scripture just as much as fornication. One should not try to imagine a hypothetical situation in which a lie would ever bring about the ultimate, greatest good possible—for example, the eternal life of another. For one who proclaims the gospel with a lie undercuts the truth of the gospel, and if a person cannot trust a Christian who is telling a lie for the sake of his salvation, then he would have no grounds for trusting him with respect to the message of salvation itself: "When regard for truth has been broken down or even slightly weakened, all things will remain doubtful, and unless these are believed to be true, they cannot be considered as certain" (ch. 17). "When all aspects of the problem of lying have been considered, it is clear that the testimony of the Holy Scriptures advises that one should never lie at all" (ch. 42). "Whoever thinks, moreover, that there is any kind of lie which is not a sin deceives himself sadly when he considers that he, a deceiver of others, is an honest man" (ch. 42).

Augustine's hard line continues in the *Contra mendacium*. This tractate was occasioned by a somewhat unusual situation. The heretical Priscillians had argued that lies were sometimes not only acceptable, but commendable. An orthodox leader, Consentius, was willing to pretend to accept Priscillian teachings (a kind of lie) in order to infiltrate the group and expose them as heretics. For Augustine, even such commendable ends do not justify the use of deception. As he asks rhetorically, "Therefore, how can I suitably proceed against lies by lying?" (ch. 1). Augustine goes on to maintain that if duplicitous concealment were licit, Christ would have told his sheep to dress in wolves' clothing, so as to discover the wolves; instead, they are told to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing (ch. 12). For Augustine, the

teaching of Scripture is plain: God will destroy *all* who lie, not just some (see Psalm 5:6–7).

Moreover, if lying were ever appropriate, the martyrs to the faith would have been completely justified in lying to avoid torture and death. But they did not lie, for they realized that something is far worse than temporary torture and physical death: it is eternal torment and spiritual death, which comes to all those who willfully sin (ch. 3). And so, for Augustine, "Of course, it makes a difference for what reason, for what end, with what intention anything is done. But, those things which are clearly sins ought not to be done under any pretext of a good reason, for any supposedly good end, with any seemingly good intention" (ch. 18). His ultimate conclusion:

> You must hold and firmly defend the contention that in matters of divine religion we ought never to lie at all. Just as we do not seek out hidden adulterers by adultery or homicides by homicide or sorcerers by sorcery, so we should not seek out liars by lying or blasphemers by blasphemy. (ch. 41)

Similar Perspectives

It is sometimes overlooked that Augustine needed to argue so vociferously for his position on lying precisely because most Christians took a different view. As Griffiths points out, Augustine may have been the first thinker in the Christian religion to give a systematic treatment of the two big questions about lying: what a lie is, and whether it is ever permissible. But "few Christians agreed with him when he wrote."[22]

There were some who did, however. And so, Lactantius, writing against the poet Lucilius, who implied that whereas one should never lie to one's friends, it was acceptable to lie to one's enemies, could state:

> The other things which the worshiper of God ought to observe are easy when those virtues have been attained. For he would never lie for the sake of deceiving or harming. It is wrong for him who is eager for the truth to be false in any respect and to depart from that very truth which he follows. In this way of justice and of all virtues, there is no place for a lie.… Nor will he ever commit the crime of

> having his tongue, "the interpreter of the mind," at variance with his feeling and intention.[23]

So too Eusebius, in the *Preparatio:*

> A mortal man who paid any little regard to virtue would never lie but would choose rather to reverence the truth; nor would he lay the blame of a lie upon any necessity of fate or course of the stars. But even if anyone were to bring fire or sword against his body, to compel him to pervert the word of truth, yet even against this he would reply in freedom's tone:
>
> "Come fire, come sword;
> Burn, and scorch up this flesh, and gorge thyself
> With my dark blood; for sooner shall the stars
> Sink down to earth, and earth rise up to heav'n
> Than fawning word shall meet thee from my lips." (6.6)[24]

John Cassian's Alternative Perspective

This hard-core view of lying as never, ever permissible ran up against a much more popular view, embraced by non-Christian and Christian authors alike, that there were indeed circumstances under which it was not only permissible but commendable to engage in lies and other forms of deceit. As Speyer and, especially, Norbert Brox have recognized, this ancient Christian attitude may well explain the willingness of many anonymous literati to forge documents in the names of others, lying about their identity in order to convey what they understood to be the truth.[25] This contrary view can be seen in a relatively clear form in a key passage of John Cassian's *Conferences*, in which he recounts a late sleepless night conversation in the desert between Abba Germanus and Abba Joseph (the words are those of Joseph; they appear to represent Cassian's own view as well, but whether they do or not is immaterial to the point).

Abba Joseph insists that it is sometimes the right thing to do to lie, but one must use supreme caution and circumspection:

> And so a lie is to be thought of and used as if it were hellebore. If it is taken when a deadly disease is imminent it has a healthful effect, but taken when there is no urgent need it is the cause of immediate death. For we read that even men who were holy and most approved by God made such good use of lying that they not only did not commit sin thereby but even acquired the highest righteousness. If deceit were capable of conferring glory on them, would truth, on the other hand, have brought them anything but condemnation?[26]

Joseph cites the story of Rahab from the book of Joshua. Had she spoken the truth when asked where the Israelite spies were hiding, they could not have done her a favor later, and spared her family or her, and she would never, then, have become one of the progenitors of Christ himself (in fact, the messianic line then would have been broken). Contrast that with Delilah who disastrously spoke the truth and as a result "obtained everlasting perdition in exchange for this, and left to everyone nothing but the memory of her sin." Joseph's conclusion: "When some grave danger is connected with speaking the truth, therefore, the refuge of lying must be resorted to (yet in such a way that we are bitten by the healthful guilt of a humbled conscience.)" But that is acceptable before God, who ""perceives the inner devotion of the heart and judges not the sound of the words but the intent of the will, because it is the end of the work and the disposition of the doer that must be considered." In sum: "One person can be justified even when lying, whereas another can commit a sin deserving everlasting death by telling the truth."

A sharper contrast to the Augustinian view can scarcely be imagined (except one that insisted that lying was *always* the moral thing!). But Cassian was not inventing an ethics of lying out of whole cloth. On the contrary, he was standing in a long and noble line of ethical thinking that can be traced back for centuries. In pagan circles, it is most famously associated with the great Socrates himself.[27]

Pagan Advocacy for the Lie

According to Xenophon, Socrates taught that there were certain situations in which lying was not only permissible but appropriate. This is the case, for example, when a general "seeing that his army is downhearted, tells a lie and says that reinforcements are approaching, and by means of this lie checks discouragement among the men." So too, in a yet better known and much repeated example, lying is proper if "a man's son refuses to take a dose of medicine when he needs it, and the father induces him to take it by pretending that it is food, and cures him by means of this lie" (*Memorab*. 4, 2, 14–18).[28] This idea of a "medicinal" lie became a commonplace in ancient ethical discourse. It recurs on Socrates's lips in Plato's "Republic."

Plato's own views of lying, as with most of his views on most things, are very difficult to ascertain, given the nature of his dialogues and the logic of his dialectical methods. But the various positions championed at one point or another in the dialogues—whether they are the historical Plato's actual views or others' that he sees either as false or only as partly true—are almost always views that were seen as "acceptable" to some of his ancient Greek readers.

There is a good deal of discourse on lying in the "Republic." For example, at 382c-d, Socrates declares that it is acceptable to lie to one's enemies, to one's friends in order to prevent them from doing harm to themselves, and in fables and myths designed to lead a person to the truth. Best known, however, is Socrates's proposal of the "noble lie" that was to help sustain the proper leadership and ordered society of his Republic. In building his case for the noble lie, Socrates begins by insisting that lying is sometimes the proper thing to do, with recourse to the idea of the medicinal lie:

> But further we must surely prize truth most highly. For if we were right in what we were just saying and falsehood is in very deed useless to gods, but to men useful as a remedy or form of medicine, it is obvious that such a thing must be assigned to physicians, and laymen should have nothing to do with it" [and who, for Plato, are the "physicians" who can dole out the medicinal lie? The enlightened rulers of the state, who are all trained in philosophy]. "The rulers then of the city may, if anybody, fitly lie on account of enemies or citizens for the benefit of the state: no others may have anything to do with it." (389b)[29]

Somewhat later, in a summary statement, Socrates reiterates: "It seems likely that our rulers will have to make considerable use of falsehood and deception for the benefit of their subjects" (459c-d). The noble lie itself is spelled out in 414–15. In this utopian Republic, the philosopher-kings who are the leaders need to propagate the lie that everyone in the state was formed within the earth by God, some of them with gold intermixed with their characters (these would be the ones appointed by God to be the rulers), others with silver (their helpers), and yet others, the majority, with brass or iron. On no account can a ruler have a mixture of brass or iron in his constitution.

As a kind of control over society, then, the rulers claim that they are inherently suited—made by God—to be rulers, and the artisans and farmers and the like, that is, the majority of the people, have been made with inferior characters. These then must be ruled by others of superior nature. The irony is that for Plato, this "lie" actually conveys the "truth." There really are some people who are constituted to be leaders: the philosophers who are able to sustain the hard training of dialectical reasoning so as to come to see the "truth." No one else can rule in the ideal state. And so, as Christopher Gill has stressed, "The noble lie is properly described as a 'lie' because what is involved is deliberate non-veracity; but the lie is clearly designed to propagate an idea which the argument presents as true, namely that each member of the ideal state should be placed in the class for which he or she is naturally suited." For Plato, says Gill, "lying, as in the case of the noble lie, may be the most effective way to propagate truth."[30]

The idea that there could be occasions when lies and other forms of deceit were legitimate is attested throughout the writings of pagan authors, often showing up in unexpected places, as in the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles, where Odysseus tries to convince Neoptolemus to take Philoctetes by deceit, since otherwise it would be impossible. Neoptolemus asks, "Then you think it brings no shame to speak what is false?" And Odysseus replies, "No, not if the falsehood yields deliverance" (II. 108–09).[31] Centuries later Cicero can state with mild approbation that "rhetoricians are allowed to lie in their historical presentations" (*Brutus* 11.42). In a sharply contrasting context Heliodorus celebrates the virtue of the helpful lie, "For lying is good when it benefits those who speak the lie and does no harm to those who hear it" (*Ethiopica*, 1.26.6,).

Christian Advocacy of the Lie

What matters most for our purposes is that there was also a widespread Christian discourse, which Augustine found deeply irritating, that advocated the appropriate use of lies and deceit, in certain circumstances.

The Insistence on the Truth

As might naturally be expected, early Christian sources are full of exhortations to speak the truth. The author of Ephesians, as we have seen, can urge his readers: "Let each of you put aside the lie and speak the truth with his neighbor" (Eph. 4:25). I have already mentioned the irony, to be dwelt on at greater length in a moment, that this injunction occurs in a letter whose author lied about his own identity. The same irony occurs in the equally pseudonymous letter to the Colossians: "Do not lie to one another" (Col. 3.9). After the New Testament period comes a host of injunctions not to lie. In the orthonymous *Shepherd* of Hermas, for example, the following brief exchange appears between the Shepherd and Hermas:

> Then he spoke to me again, "Love the truth and let all truth come from your mouth … For the Lord is true in his every word, and there is no lie in him. And so, those who lie reject the Lord and defraud him, not handing over to him the deposit they received. For they received from him a spirit that does not lie; if they return it to him as a liar, they defile the commandment of the Lord and become defrauders." (Commandments, 3.1–2)

So too Justin, allegedly writing to the emperor, points out: "You can be sure that we have spoken these things for your benefit, since we, when on trial can always deny [that we are Christians]. But we do not desire to live by lying" (1 *Apol*. 8.2). This, as we have seen, is a view later picked up by Augustine, who pointed out that the martyrs were a clear proof that it is never right to lie in order to reap a greater benefit, such as avoiding torture.

The Virtue of the Lie

Even though it is a "given" that Christian ethical teachings insisted on the truth, there are a startling number of authors who share the view of Cassian's Abba Joseph, that it is also sometimes a good thing to lie. We

might start with Clement of Alexandria, who insists that the true "Gnostic" tell the truth but makes an exception for the so-called medicinal lie: "For [the Gnostic] both thinks and speaks the truth; unless at any time, medicinally, as a physician for the safety of the sick, he may deceive or tell an untruth, according to the Sophists" (*Strom*. 7.9).[32] That Clement does not see this simply as a bit of sophistry is evident from what follows. The apostle Paul was known, according to Clement, to have used deceit in two circumstances, when he circumcised Timothy after declaring that "circumcision made with hands profits nothing" and when he occasionally took upon himself the burdens of the Jewish Law in order to win Jews over to the faith, so that he, "accommodating himself to the Jews, became a Jew that he might gain all." Elsewhere, again, Clement uses the physician analogy to justify the use of deception (*Strom*. 7.53).

Origen, not surprisingly, argues in a similar vein. In the *Contra Celsum* he notes that Celsus had accused the Christians of making God a purveyor of deceit by coming to earth in the (false) appearance of being human. In this context Celsus alludes to Plato, "Deceit and lying are in all other cases wrong except only when one uses them as a medicine for friends who are sick and mad in order to heal them, or with enemies when the intention is to escape danger" (4.18).[33] For Celsus, then, the divine deceit at the incarnation was impermissible, because it did not meet the criterion of a justified lie. Origen demurs, arguing that God in fact came to earth as a man precisely to "heal" the human race, so that the incarnation deceit was completely justified.

> Do you not say, Celsus, that sometimes it is allowable to use deceit and lying as a medicine? Why, then, is it unthinkable that something of this sort occurred with the purpose of bringing salvation? … There is nothing wrong if the person who heals sick friends healed the human race which was dear to him with such means as one would not use for choice, but to which he was confined by the force of circumstances. Since the human race was mad, it had to be cured by methods which the Word saw to be beneficial to lunatics. (4.19)

Elsewhere we learn that Origen supported the use of the strategic lie. The passage comes to us from the now-lost *Stromateis*, which fortunately are quoted, in parts, by Jerome. The most relevant portion comes from book six in which, according to Jerome, Origen "tries to adapt our Christian doctrine to the opinions of Plato"[34]:

> To God falsehood is shameful and useless, but to men it is occasionally useful. We must not suppose that God ever lies, even in the way of economy; only, if the good of the hearer requires it, he speaks in ambiguous language, and reveals what he wills in enigmas. … But a man on whom necessity imposes the responsibility of lying is bound to use very great care, and to use falsehood as he would a stimulant or a medicine, and strictly to preserve its measure.

He then instances the sanctioned lies told by the biblical characters of Judith, Esther, and Jacob and concludes: "From all this it is evident that if we speak falsely with any other object than that of obtaining by it some great good, we shall be judged as the enemies of him who said, 'I am the truth.'"

Jerome, however, attacks this view with a good bit of wit: "[Origen's] teaching is that the master may lie, but the disciple must not. The inference from this is that the man who is a good liar, and without hesitation sets before his brethren any fabrication which rises into his mouth, shows himself to be an excellent teacher" (*Adv. Rufin*. 1.18).

It is interesting to note, however, that Jerome elsewhere speaks approvingly of the use of Christian deception, in particular with respect to the famous incident in Antioch discussed by Paul in Galatians 2 (the view that prompted Augustine to write *De mendacio*): in Jerome's well-known position, Peter and Paul did not actually have a falling out. They put on a show, in a double act of dissimulation: Peter "pretended" to be subject to Jewish dietary laws for the sake of the brethren, knowing that he was not really subject to them, and Paul, cognizant of the true state of things, "pretended" to rebuke Peter in order to show the gentile Christians that he was on their side so as to keep from giving offense.[35]

Origen provides a particularly interesting perspective on the permissible lie in his *Commentary on John*, where he is dealing with the historical discrepancies among the canonical Gospels. In his view, the evangelists changed historical data on occasion in order to convey spiritual truths: "For their intention was to speak the truth spiritually and materially at the same time, where that was possible, but where it was not possible in both ways, to prefer the spiritual to the material. The spiritual truth is often preserved in the material falsehood, so to speak" (10.4).[36] As an example of how this works, Origen appeals to the famous instance of Jacob lying, for a good cause, to his blind father Isaac, saying "I am Esau, your first born son." According to Origen, Jacob "was telling the truth in the spiritual sense … because he had a share of the birthright which was already perishing in his brother." And this is why contradictory statements about Christ in Scripture can both be true, because they participate in spiritual truths even if they contain material contradictions. Thus Christ can be called both man and not man; he can be both Son and servant.[37]

In addition to these rather abstract disquisitions on lying, we have several anecdotes about prominent church fathers in which, without any qualms, they used deceit when it served their purposes. One of the more amusing, worth quoting in full, involves Athanasius under pursuit, as narrated by Theodoret in his *Church History* (again, the historicity of the story does not matter for my point, as it shows an attitude toward deceit):

> Moved by these supplications Julian condemned Athanasius not merely to exile, but to death. His people shuddered, but it is related that he foretold the rapid dispersal of the storm, for said he "It is a cloud which soon vanishes away." He however withdrew as soon as he learnt of the arrival of the bearers of the imperial message, and finding a boat on the bank of the river, started for the The-baid. The officer who had been appointed for his execution became acquainted with his flight, and strove to pursue him at hot haste; one of his friends, however, got ahead, and told him that the officer was coming on apace. Then some of his companions besought him to take refuge in the desert, but he ordered the steersman to turn the boat's head to Alexandria. So they rowed to meet the pursuer, and on came the bearer of the sentence of execution, and, said he, "How far off is Athanasius?" "Not far," said Athanasius, and so got rid of

> his foe, while he himself returned to Alexandria and there remained in concealment for the remainder of Julian's reign. (*H.E.* 3.5)[38]

This is obviously a case where no lie was actually told. The humor of the story resides in the fact that, strictly speaking, Athanasius told the truth. But recall Augustine's view that a lie need not come only in words, but in "signs of whatever kind."

A second and better known account involves an autobiographical tale told by Chrysostom in Book One of *De sacerdotio*, a passage that Paul Griffiths has aptly termed "a hymn of praise to the lie."[39] According to Chrysostom's account, as promising young men, both he and Basil were being pursued in order forcibly to be ordained into the episcopacy. Chrysostom lied to Basil, promising to accept the ordination, and on those grounds Basil relented and did so himself. But Chrysostom did not; it was all a pretext. In its aftermath, Chrysostom engaged in a bit of Schadenfreude, to Basil's dismay: "But when he saw that I was delighted and beaming with joy, and understood that he had been deceived by me, he was yet more vexed and distressed" (1.6).[40]

Basil responds with a bitter lament: "I placed my very life, so to say, in your hands, yet you have treated me with as much guile as if it had been your business to guard yourself against an enemy" (1.7). In response, Chrysostom launches into a kind of encomium to deceit:

> What is the wrong that I have done thee, since I have determined to embark from this point upon the sea of apology? Is it that I misled you and concealed my purpose? Yet I did it for the benefit of thyself who wast deceived, and of those to whom I surrendered you by means of this deceit. For if the evil of deception is absolute, and it is never right to make use of it, I am prepared to pay any penalty you please … But if the thing is not always harmful, but becomes good or bad according to the intention of those who practice it, you must desist from complaining of deceit, and prove that it has been devised against you for a bad purpose.… For a well-timed deception, undertaken with an upright intention, has such advantages, that many persons have often had to undergo punishment for abstaining from fraud. (1.8)

Here we have Cassian's view instantiated and celebrated: lies are not harmful if the intention of the liar is good. Indeed, they are to be used when the circumstances call for it. Chrysostom does not stop there, however, but goes on to speak of two biblical instances of "good" deceit that saved the life of King David (1 Sam 19:12–18; 20:11), and to refer to doctors who employ the medicinal lie: "If any one were to reckon up all the tricks of physicians the list would run on to an indefinite length. And not only those who heal the body but those also who attend to the diseases of the soul may be found continually making use of this remedy" (1.8). He concludes with bold statements that are precisely at odds with the view of an Augustine:

> For great is the value of deceit, provided it be not introduced with a mischievous intention … And often it is necessary to deceive, and to do the greatest benefits by means of this device, whereas he who has gone by a straight course has done great mischief to the person whom he has not deceived. (1.8)[41]

The Morality of Christian Forgery

At the outset of our study we saw that forgery, when it is explicitly discussed in antiquity, is roundly and emphatically condemned. Most readers did not consider this kind of lie to be acceptable, even if they did sanction other lies for other reasons. If someone's life could be saved by a white lie, all to the good (for many Christians); if someone could be delivered from pain and suffering, from rape or torture, then surely (for many Christians), lying could be justified. But with the literary texts written under the cloud of deceit, we are not dealing with matters of life and death. The issues may have seemed enormous to the writers of these texts. But most readers, at least, condemned the practice. Moreover, unlike fiction, forgery does not include a contract between author and reader where veracity is suspended for the sake of the text. Ancient Christian readers expected authors to name themselves, if they named anyone at all, and not to lie about who they really were.

And so, it is not difficult at all to see what someone standing in Augustine's camp would have thought of forgery. Augustine may well have been speaking for many (most?) other Christians, both of his own day and

earlier, when he reflected on the need for Scripture, in particular, not to be implicated in lying and deceit:

> It seems to me that no good at all can come of our believing that the sacred texts contain anything false or incorrect—that is, that these men through whom the Bible was given to us and who committed it to writing set down anything that was not true in those books. It is one question whether a good man might at some time tell a lie, but it is another question altogether whether a writer of Holy Scripture might have intended to lie or deceive. No, it is not another question—it is no question at all. If you can point out at least one instance of the intentional falsehood within this holy citadel of authority, then anything in the Bible which strikes us as too hard to practice, or too difficult to believe in, can simply be explained away as a deliberate untruth. (*Epist*. 28.3)[42]

Or, as he says elsewhere in another letter:

> [I]f it is the case that we admit into Holy Scripture claims which are untrue but which serve some profounder purpose—for the sake of religion, let us say—then how do we defend the authority of the Bible? What statement in the Bible will be strong enough to stand up against the wicked stubbornness of heresy? Anyone arguing with you can claim that in the passage you are citing the writer really intended something else, he had a higher purpose in mind" (*Epist*. 40.3)[43]

This is clearly a hard line when it comes to truth and deceit, and I see no reason to doubt that a large number of Christians would have agreed with it (whether the majority or not—who can say?). Augustine may have seen himself standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the author of Ephesians, who tells his readers that they are to "Fasten the belt of truth around your waist." Truth was all-important for this canonical writer. Early on he refers to the gospel as "the word of truth" (1:13); he indicates that the "truth is in Jesus" (4:21); and he declares that the "fruit of the light is found in the truth" (5:9). Most important, as we have seen, he insists that his readers "put aside the

lie and speak the truth" to their neighbors (4:25). And yet the author lied about his own identity, claiming to be the apostle Paul when in fact he was someone else, living years later. What would Augustine and those who were like-minded have thought about this author, and his book, had they known the truth of its authorship? They would have called the author a liar and his book a deceit, and they would not have admitted it into the canon of Scripture.

But what did the author himself think? He must have known that he lied. But if he was like a large number of other Christians, he must have also thought that there were times when it was appropriate to lie, that the intention of the lie was more important than the fact of the lie, that sometimes it was the right thing to do to reject truth and embrace falsehood. Most Christians—and undoubtedly this unknown author himself—knew full well that throughout Scripture lies could further and promote the will of God. If Abraham had not lied about his wife Sarah, calling her his sister, he may well have been killed and the nation of Israel would never have come into being (Genesis 12). If Jacob had not deceived Isaac to receive the birthright, Israel would never have become heir of the promises of God (Genesis 27). If the midwives of Egypt had not lied about the hardiness of the Hebrew women giving birth, the nation may well have been destroyed and Moses would certainly never have come into existence (Exodus 1). If Rahab had not lied about the whereabouts of the Israelite spies, Israel may have never been able to take the Promised Land; if they did, she and her family would not have been spared, and she would not have been in the messianic line; in fact the line may well have ended prematurely at that point (Joshua 2). If Michal and Jonathan had not lied for David, he may well have been killed by Saul, before he produced the offspring that would lead to the coming of his greatest Son, the Messiah (1 Samuel 19–20). Jesus too was known to have used deceit, indicating that he was not going to the feast in Jerusalem while knowing full well that he was about to go (John 7). Even God could use deceit when he chose to do so, as declared in forthright terms by the prophet Jeremiah: "You deceived me and I was deceived" (20:7). And as shown, for example, in his declaration through Jonah that Nineveh was to be destroyed in forty days, when he knew full well that it was not to be.

Did forgers think that lying is sometimes not only right, but divinely sanctioned? That it is sometimes morally acceptable, even necessary, to lie

and deceive others? That a greater good can sometimes result from a lie than from the truth? At an early stage of our study we considered the one instance of a Christian forger who discussed his motives for lying about his identity, Salvian of Marseille, who, among other things declared: "For this reason the present writer chose to conceal his identity in every respect for fear that his true name would perhaps detract from the influence of his book, which really contains much that is exceedingly valuable."[44] He had an important book to write, and no one would read it if it were attributed to a nobody like Salvian. And so he wrote it in the name of Timothy, in hopes that it would have a wide influence.

It may well be that other forgers—of both canonical and non-canonical texts—felt similarly. They may have believed that they had a high moral obligation to convey the truth as it had been revealed to them. They may have reasoned that they needed to have their words read as widely as possible. They may have realized that the best way to assure a broad and much-deserved influence was by hiding their identity behind that of a greater authority. They may have thought that they had a truth to convey, and they may have been willing to lie in order to convey it.

1. For my tally I am including Acts, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude.

2. See, e.g., pp. 19–20, if one chooses to trust Epiphanius.

3. Translation of M. Atkinson and A. Robinson, *NPNF*, second series, vol. 4.

4. Translation of W. H. Fremantle in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 3.

5. E.g., Basil, *Epist*. 224, 1; Augustine *Epist*. 59.1–2.

6. "Jede Fälschung täuscht einen Sachverhalt vor, der den tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten nicht entspricht. Damit gehört die Fälschung in das Gebiet der Lüge und des Betrugs.… Nur wo Täuschungabsicht, also dolus malus, vorliegt, wird der Tatbestand der Fälschung erfüllt. Insofern gehört die Fälschung zur Lüge, und zwar zur vorsätzlichen Lüge"; *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 3, 13.

7. If such a thing as "fiction" can be imagined for antiquity. On this, see the next note. In antiquity, of course, there were epic poems, Greek novels (as satirized in Lucian's "True Story"), epistolary novels, etc., and these *were* read differently from "histories."

8. For an argument that ancient writers and readers did not have anything that corresponded to our category of "fiction," see Christopher Gill, "Plato on Falsehood–Not Fiction," in Gill and Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction*, pp. 38–87. Gill maintains that in modern ways of construing literature, we think of fiction as narrative that is imaginary, "made up" by the author. This is not a category for Plato. When he speaks of the myths being ΨΕΥΔΟΙ, he does not mean that they are made up; he means they teach lessons that are not true. That is Plato's principle category: Does something teach what one needs to learn in order to live rightly? And so he does not contradict himself when he condemns the ΨΕΥΔΟΙ of the poets but then tells his own myths (Er, the Cave, and so on). And when he urges the Noble Lie (which is true). Or when he invents dialogues. None of these things is the absolute embodiment of truth, since that can be reached and conveyed only through dialectical reasoning. But they are pathways to the truth, false in medium and in not being able to convey "truth" in its full and pristine state, but not false because they are made up, invented, imagined. I am in full agreement with this view of Plato. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that ancient persons did recognize that a history of Thucydides was not the same sort of writing as a novel by Achilles Tatius. Nowhere is that clearer than in Lucian's parody of history in his fictional work, "A True Story."

9. "Prologue," Gill and Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction*, p. xvi. Emphasis his.

0. See more fully pp. 43–67.

1. We have seen, for example, the problems with considering the Apostolic Constitutions and 2 Peter as plagiarized, even though they certainly take over other writings wholesale for the production of their own (though not under the author's own name).

2. The New Testament writings were widely falsified by scribes over the centuries, but they do not stand alone. We have seen the interpolations in the Pseudo-Ignatians and the Sibyllina (considering only these in our study, since they are closely related to forgeries in their respective corpora); other instances abound, as, for example, in the writings of Dionysius of Alexandria and Origen.

3. Many fabricated stories are not to be chalked up to malicious intent. But there are numerous episodes from the lives of Jesus that do not pass even ancient standards of veracity, whether stories about Jesus involving a census under Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria or involving his mischievous deeds as a five-year-old wunderkind. Stories about the

apostles proliferated as well, as we have seen, whether made up as entertainment or for other more ideological reasons, such as Peter and the smoked tuna, Paul and the baptized lion, and John and the obedient bedbugs, just to stick with an animal theme.

4. I have not dealt at any length with false attribution here, even though it affects a number of the writings of the New Testament (the Gospels, 2 and 3 John), not to mention later writers (Pseudo-Justin, Pseudo-Tertullian, Pseudo-Chrysostom, and on and on). In many instances the attributions may have been made in full cognizance that there were no real grounds for making the ascriptions (the Gospel of Matthew); in other instances they were probably simply made by mistake (Pseudo-Justin).

5. See further pp. 546–47.

6. "Wie bereits bemerkt wurde, macht die Täuschungsabsicht, die jenseits eines literarischen Zwekkes liegt, ein Pseudepigraphon zur Fälschung. Fälschung und Lüge aber stimmen darin überein, daß sie einen wirklichen Sachverhalt verhüllen und den Schein der Wahrheit für einen nicht zutreffenden Tatbestand vortäuschen. Dazu benutzen sie das Mittel der Verstellung. Die literarische Fälschung ist somit ein Sonderfall der Lüge, näherhin des Betruges. Diese Verwandtschaft zwischen literarischer Fälschung und Lüge scheint jedoch weder im Altertum noch in der Neuzeit näher beachtet worden zu sein.… Es ist aber zu fragen, ob im Altertum jede Lüge als unsittlich verurteilt wurde, oder ob hier unterschieden wurde und Täuschung in gewissen Fällen als erlaubt galt"; *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 94

7. For important literature on lying in antiquity, see the classic studies of Franz Schindler, "Die Lüge in der patristischen Literatur," *Beiträge zur Geschichte des christlichen Altertums und der byzantinischen Literatur* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969; originally published 1922); P. Wenzeslaus Sadok Mackowiak, *Die Ethische Beurteilung der Notlüge in der altheidnischen, patristischen, scholastischen, und neueren Zeit* (Zolkiew: Verlag der Dominakamer, 1933); Gregor Müller, *Die Wahrhaftigkeitspflicht und die Problematik der Lüge: Ein Längsschnitt durch die Moraltheologie und Ethik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tugendlehre des Thomas von Aquin und der modernen Lösungsversuche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962). In addition, see David Satran, "Pedagogy and Deceit in the Alexandrian Theological Tradition," in *Origeniana Quinta* ed. R. J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 119–24; Boniface Ramsey, "Two Traditions on Lying and

Deception in the Ancient Church," *Thom*. 49 (1985): 504–33; and the studies cited in n. 18.

8. There are a number of important studies of Augustine's view of lying, all of them eclipsed by Paul J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004). See also Alan Brinton, "St. Augustine and the Problem of Deception in Religious Persuasion," *RelS* 19 (1983): 437–50; Marcia L. Colish, "The Stoic Theory of Verbal Signification and the Problem of Lies and False Statements from Antiquity to St. Anselm," in *L'Archéologie de Signe*, ed. L. Brind'amour and E. Vance (Toronto: Institut Pontifical d'Etudes Médiévales, 1983), pp. 17–43; Thomas D. Feehan, "Augustine on Lying and Deception," *AugStud* 19 (1988): 131–39; Feehan, "The Morality of Lying in St. Augustine," *AugStud* 21 (1990): 67–81; and Feehan, "Augustine's Own Examples of Lying," *AugStud* 22 (1991): 165–90.

9. Translation of Mary Muldowny, *Augustine: Treatises on Various Subjects* FC, 16 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1952). All subsequent quotations of both this work and the *Contra mendacium* will be from this translation.

0. Griffiths, *Lying*, p. 25.

1. Ibid., p. 31.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. *Institutions* 6:18; translation of Mary Francis Macdonald, *Lactantius, The Divine Institutions*, FC (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1964).

4. Translation of Edwin Hamilton Gifford (1903 tr.).

5. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 96; Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 83–104. See pp. 132–37 above.

6. Translation of Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences* (ACW; New York: Newman Press, 1997). All quotations of this work will be taken from this edition.

7. Among a host of studies, see esp. T. P. Wiseman, "Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity," in Gills and Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction*, pp. 122–46; Christopher Gill, "Plato on Falsehood"; Jane S. Zembaty, "Plato's Republic and Greek Morality on Lying," *JHP* 26 (1988): 517–45.

8. Translation of E. C. Marchant and O. J. Todd, *Xenophon*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1923).

9. Translation of Paul Shorey, *Plato*; LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1937).
0. Gill, "Plato on Falsehood," pp. 53, 55.
1. *The Philoctetes of Sophocles*. Edited with introduction and notes by Sir Richard Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898).
2. Translation in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson *ANF*, vol. 2.
3. Translation of Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*.
4. Jerome, *Adv. Rufin*. 1.18.
5. Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians* ad loc. See his Epistle 112 to Augustine. I owe this reference to Maria Doerfler. See also Chrysostom's *Homily* 2 on Galatians. I owe this reference to Andrew Jacobs.
6. Translation of Ronald Heine, *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel of John 1–10*, FC (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1989).
7. See also Origen's *Homilies* on Jeremiah, 19.15 and 20.3, where he strains to explain Jer. 20:7: "You have deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived."
8. Translation of Blomfield Jackson, *NPNF*, series 2, vol. 3.
9. Griffiths, *Lying*, p. 135.
0. Translation taken from W. R. W. Stephens in *NPNF*, series 1, vol. 7.
1. For divinely sanctioned use of deceit in the early Christian tradition, one need only think of the bizarre crucifixion scene narrated, or so we're told by Irenaeus, in the Gospel of Basilides, where Jesus, having pulled an identity switch with Simon of Cyrene, stands by and laughs while the Romans crucify the wrong man. The theme is reprised in the Pseudo-Clementines in the fateful switch of identity that Simon effects with Faustianus, a move that seriously backfires thanks to the clever intervention and manipulation of Peter.
2. Translation of Joseph W. Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), p. 259.
3. Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 263.
4. See the discussion on pp. 94–96.

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INDEX OF ANCIENT SOURCES

This index includes only **Ancient Sources.**

For general concepts, including a topical guide to ancient sources, refer to the **Subject** Index found on pages 591-622.

For modern scholars, refer to the **Modern Scholars** index found on pages 623-628.

BIBLICAL

Genesis

2:25 235

3 376–77

12 547

15:6 292, 296 n. 26

22 135

27 547

49:10 321

Jeremiah

2:21 342

4:4 343

20:7 136, 548, 544 n. 37

Daniel, 7-12 71

Hosea

1:6 250

1:9 250

2:25 253

Joel, 2:28-29 503 n. 58
Exodus
1 547
1:15-22 135
Leviticus, 19:18 293
Deuteronomy
18:18-23 320
25:4 375
30:10-25 231
Joshua, 2 135, 547
1 Samuel
19-20 548
19:11–18 135
19:12-18 545
20:11 545
Psalms
5:6-7 537
32:1 177
119 470
Proverbs, 10:12 247
Solomon, 1-2 71
Isaiah
8:14 253
28:16 253
Matthew, gospel of
2 488
6:1-8 338

9 141
13:55 486
20:19 418
23:13 341
24:23-26 236
24:23-28 120 n. 92
Mark, gospel of
1:15 165
4:26-27 430
6:3 297
7:19 373 n. 8
9:1 234
13 408, 447
13:21-23 236
13:30 155
14:37 327 n. 8
15:14 418
Luke, gospel of
1:1-4 483
2 351
7:1-10 246 n. 24
10:8-9 339
11:52 341
17:20-21 231-32, 23 1n. 77
23:39 418
24 135
John, gospel of
1 274

1:1-3 465
1:11 337
1:14 424 n. 38
3:13 336
6:46 336
7 135, 548
12:41 336
14 470
14:22 230, 297
16 470
16:7-8 457
17 470
18:28 330
19:35 424 n. 38
20:29 364, 424 n. 38457 n. 12
20:30-31 424 n. 38
21 274
21:24 270
Acts of the Apostles
2:23 418
3:22-24 318
4:4 318
4:13 245, 245 n. 23
5:34-39 318
5:37 297
9 314

9:1-2 318
9:11 297
10:14-15 373 n. 8
12:1-2 488
12–13 251 n. 41
12:23 361
14:20–28 265
15 263, 307, 391–92, 251 n. 41
16:10–17 265, 266
16:18 266
17 267
18:12–17 521
18:18–23 265
20:5–15 265
20:6 266
20:38 266
21:1–18 265
21:18 266
21:18–24 288
21:19 266
22:4–5 318
26:10–12 318
27:1–28:16 265
Romans
1 267
1–4 185
2 253

3–4 292
3:8 303 n. 45
3:28 292–93
3:31 186
4:2 291–92
4:3 292
4:7 177
5:3–5 293 n. 19
5:27–6:21 253
6 185
6:1–6 176, 253
6:5 216
6:8 216
7 186, 383–84
8:5 253
8:17 254
8:24 187 n. 69
8:32 177 n. 43
9:25 253
9:33 253
11 376 n. 14
12:1 253
12:17 253
13:1–7 253
13:8–10 293
13:12 165
14:20 373 n. 8
16 376 n. 14

16:1 383-84
16:14 32 n.8, 48
16:16 254
16:22 218
1 Corinthians
1–4 185
2-3 293 n. 19
2:12 177 n. 43
3:2 253
3:11 187
4:8 163
7 178, 372, 376
7:26 163
8 372
9 376
9:5 290
10 372
10:11 253
11 384
11:2-16 374, 376
12 254
13 254
14:33-36 376
14:34-35 254, 375, 376-77, 377 n. 14
15 164, 176, 185
15:3 431
15:7 290

15:8 271
15:24-25 232
15:50 431
15:50-57 165
15:51-57 232
16:20 254
16:21 171
2 Corinthians
1-3 185
1:3-7 254
1:19 254
2:7 177 n. 43
4:7-12 254
5:1 253
6:3-10 161
6:10 254
10 177 n. 43
11:23-30 254
11:24-31 161
12:2 271
12:13 177 n. 43
13:5 299 n. 33
13:9 254
13:12 254
Galatians
1:1 439, 442
1:4 163
1:18-20 267

1:19 290
1:23 299 n. 33
2 307, 543
2:9 290, 487
2:11-14 290, 308, 316-17
2:12 287
2:16 292-93
3:7 291-92
3:18 177 n. 43
3:28 383
5:14 254, 293
5:16 253
5:17 253
5:24 253, 418
6:2 186
6:11 171
12 290
Ephesians
1:1-2 184, 187
1:3 184
1:3-14 184, 185
1:7 177, 184, 186
1:13 188, 547
1:14 185
1:15-16 184
1:15-23 184, 185
1:20-21 185
1:22-23 186

2:1-5 184
2:1-7 184
2:1-10 184, 186, 189, 211, 217, 295
2:5-6 186
2:6 185
2:7 185
2:8-10 187
2:10 185
2:11-21 189
2:12-13 184
2:14-16 184
2:15 186
2:20 187
3:1 187
3:1-4 188 n. 71
3:2 184, 187
3:3 188
3:4 188
3:5 187
3:8 188, 188 n. 71
3:8-12 184
3:9 184
3:10 185
3:13 188
3:14 188
3:14-19 184
4:1 188

4:2-6 189
4:5 440
4:8 190
4:11-16 184
4:12-13 184
4:14 189
4:15 188
4:15-16 186
4:16 184
4:20-21 188 n. 71
4:21 188, 547
4:22-24 184
4:25 188, 189, 190, 541, 547
4:27 185, 254
5:6 185
5:9 188, 547
5:21-33 184
5:21-6:9 189
5:22 254
5:31 190
6:2-3 190
6:11 185, 254
6:12 185
6:14 188
6:18-22 188 n. 71
6:19 188
6:20 188

6:21 188
6:21-22 184, 217
6:22 188
Philippians
1:29 177 n. 43
2:6-10 253
2:9 177 n. 43
2:17 253
3 185
3:6 186
3:11 176
4:3 159, 311
4:5 165
4:22 521
Colossians
1:1 172, 174
1:1–2 184, 176 n. 41
1:4 184
1:5 177 n. 42
1:6 182
1:9 184
1:13 181
1:14 177, 184, 186
1:15–20 177
1:18 178, 186
1:19 181
1:20 184
1:23 172

1:24 177
1:25 184
1:26 184
1:27 177 n. 42
1:28 182
2:1 182
2:5 182 n. 53
2:8–23 179–81
2:12–13 176, 184
2:13 177, 184
2:16 177
2:17 177, 182 n. 53
2:18 304
2:19 184, 186
2:20–21 177
3:1 176
3:4 177 n. 42
3:6 177 n. 42
3.9 541
3:13 177
3:16 184
3:18–19 184
3:18–4:1 178
3:18–4:6 254
4:3 174, 182 n. 53
4:7–8 184
4:9 174
4:10 254

4:10-14 174
4:16 105, 182, 441, 443
4:17 174
4:18 172, 176 n. 41
1 Thessalonians
1:1 159, 254
1:2-10 160
1:3 159
1:4 159
2:9 159, 170
2:13 160, 253
3 267
3:11 159
3:12 159
3:13 159
4:1 159
4:5 159
4:7 159
4:13-18 166, 170
4:13-5:11 163
4:14-17 232
5:1-11 170
5:2 166
5:6-8 165
5:12 159
5:14 159
5:26 254

5:28 159

2 Thessalonians

1:1 159, 254

1:3 159

1:3-12 160, 161

1:8 159

1:11 159

2:1-2 156

2:1-3 76

2:1-12 156, 162-63

2:2 24, 25, 82, 127, 156, 163-64, 165, 167, 168-69, 170

2:5 166

2:13 156, 159, 160

2:13-14 159

2:15 168-69

2:17 159

3:3 185 n. 67

3:5 159

3:6 159

3:7 159

3:8 159, 170

3:11 159

3:17 25, 33, 127, 171, 171 n. 31

3:18 159

1 Timothy

1:3-7 369
1:4 371
1:6 370
1:7 371
1:10 373
1:14-15 373
1:15 373 n. 8
1:18-20 369
1:20 371
2:7 33
2:9 254
2:11-15 254, 374, 376, 377
2:15 381
3:1 254
3:1-7 378
3:1-15 369
3:2 254
3:5 377
3:6 254
3:7 254
3:8-10 377 n. 15
3:8-13 378
3:9 374
3:11 254, 377 n. 15
3:11-15 374
3:12 377 n. 15
3:14 369

4:1 371
4:3 381
4:6 369
4:7 371
4:11-16 369
4:12 369
4:13 400
4:14 369, 400
5:3-10 374
5:14 376
5:17 378
5:18 375
6:1-5 376
6:3 371
6:3-7 371
6:9-10 371
6:20 372
2 Timothy
1:3-5 122
1:20 372
2:8 180
2:26 254
3:1 163
3:3 254
3:6-7 381
3:10-11 33
4:9 33
4:10-11 381

4:11 254
4:12 209, 217
4:13 33, 122
4:16-19 381
Titus
1:5 369, 370, 378
1:7 254, 369, 374, 378
1:7-9 378
1:9 370, 373, 374
1:9-11 378
1:10 373
1:10-11 381
1:11 370, 373
1:12 373
1:13 370, 373
1:16 373
2:1-10 370
2:3 254
2:14 254
2:15 370
3:3-8 217
3:5-8 295
3:9 374
3:9-11 370
3:10-11 373
3:11 374
3:12 369

Philemon
1 174
1:9-14 174
2 174
12 174
16 376
23 174, 178 n. 46
24 174, 254
Hebrews
6:6 418
9:9 163
James
1:1 296
1:2-3 293 n. 19, 297 n. 28
1:13-15 293 n. 19
1:25 291 n. 16
2:8-11 293
2:1 293 n. 19
2:1-13 291 n. 16
2:14-26 261
2:21 291-92
2:21-24 292
2:23 292
2:24 292-93
3:13-18 293 n. 19
5:1-6 289
1 Peter

1:1 240, 248, 250, 259
1:6-7 297 n. 28
1:7 253
1:14 250
1:17 253
1:18 250, 254
1:21 253
1:23 253
2 470
2:2 253
2:5 253
2:6 253
2:8 253
2:10 253
2:11 253
2:11-12 483
2:13-14 484
2:15 484
2:18 484
2:18-3:7 254
2:20 483
2:21 255 n. 54
2:24 253
2:25 255 n. 54
3:1 254, 484
3:3 254
3:5 254

3:9 253
3:15 483
3:16-17 484
3:17 483
3:18 253, 255 n. 54, 483
3:21 253
4:2 484
4:3-4 484
4:6 253
4:7 253
4:8 247, 254
4:10 254
4:13 253, 254
4:15 484
5:1 248 n. 31, 251, 401
5:2 254
5:8 254
5:12 249
5:12-13 250
5:12-14 254
13:21-23 253
2 Peter
1:16-18 33
1:16-19 271
1:20 227
2:17 403

2:20 226
3:8-15 229
3:15-16 226
3:16 430
1 John
1 274
1:1-2 425
1:1–3 422
1:1–4 271
1:7 421
1:15 422
2:1 421
2:2 421
2:7 421
2:12 421
2:18 421
2:18–19 419–20
2:22 420
3:1–2 421
3:14 421
4:1–3 420
4:2 420–21
4:2–3 424 n. 39
4:5–6 421
5:6 421
2 John, 7 424 n. 39
Jude
4 303 n. 45

6–7 303, 303 n. 48
8 303, 303 n. 48
10 303
Revelation, 22:19 66

OTHER

Acts of Ignatius
- 5 507
- 6 507
- 7 507-8

Acts of John
- 93 438
- 101 433

Acts of Paul
- 3.23-25 381
- 3.39 381
- 3.41 381
- 3.43 381
- 11.1 381

Acts of Peter and Paul, 40-41 360

Acts of Philip, 8.2 398

Acts of Pilate, Christian
- 1.1 355
- 1.5-6 355
- 2.60.4 356
- 3.1 354
- 4.1 356
- 9.4 356
- 12.1 357

Adversus Haereses

(Irenaeus)
1.6.3-4 23
1.13.3 23
1.16.3 423
1.20.1 76, 91
1.24.4 411
1.25.4 23
3.3.2 310
3.3.3 310, 311
3.14.1 277
3.16.5 423
3.16.8 423
Adversus Helvidium (Jerome), 19 121
Adversus Marcionem (Tertullian)
3.6 492
3.7 492
4.2.2 277
4.5 91, 143
4.5.3-4 51, 76
4.7 492
5.11 440
5.17 440
Anaphora Pilati
1 359
5 359

10 359
Antiochians (Pseudo-Ignatius)
1 471, 476
5 471, 473
7 469, 472
9-10 479
11 479
12 463
14 473, 476
Antiquities (Josephus)
12.225-28 71
13.165-70 71
1 Apocalypse of James
5.3 409
5.31.17-18 409
2 Apocalypse of James, 5.4 409
Apocalypse of Paul
3-10 453
9-10 454
11-16 453
22 454
23 454
24 454
31 454
35 454

36 454
37 454
39 454
40 454
Apocalypse of Peter
1 449
2 446, 449
4 449
16 449, 450
17 449
21 449
Apocalypse of Peter, Coptic
7.70.20 401
70.24-32 408
71.19-20 401
71.19-21 408
72.10-73.22 408
72.12-13 401, 408
72.13-17 409
73.13-14 401
74.10-12 401
74.11-15 409
74.16-22 409
74.16-23 401
74.22-25 401
74.26-27 402, 408

76.27-34 402
77.22-78.1 402
79.22-31 402
79.25-26 408
79.30-31 403
79.31 408
80.3-7 402
80.8-11 402
81.3-23 409
81.30-32 410
82.4-83.13 410
82.30 411
82.33 402, 408
83.1-3 410
83.7 411
Apologia (Justin)
1.20 514
5.2 351
21.24 351
50 508
87 104, 141
Apologia ad Constantium (Eusebius)
19 530
19-21 75
Apologia adversus libros Rufini (Jerome)

1.18 543
2.11 65, 65 n. 89
2.24 75, 83, 531
3.2 75
3.20 83
3.25 75, 83
1 Apology (Justin)
8.2 542
35.6 326
35.9 351
48.3 351
66.3 325
2 Apology (Justin), 12 508
Apostolic Church Order
1 397
24-28 397
30 397
Apostolic Constitutions
1.1 273
2.24.4 15, 392
2.46 392
2.55.1 15
2.55.2 391
4.7.2 392
5.1.7 515

5.7 392
5.13 392-93
5.19.1 392
6.7.4 392
6.8 15
6.9 15
6.12 15, 391-92
6.14 15
6.16 126
6.16.1 17, 395
6.16.11 15
7 15
7.2.12 15
7.11 15
7.46.1-2 15
8 15
8.3 16
8.3.2 395
8.4 392
8.12 392-93
8.16 15
8.17 392
8.33.8 15
8.35.1 15
8.46.13 15
8.47 19, 395
8.47.60 18, 126, 395

8.47.85 15, 16, 17
Ascension of Isaiah
1-5 332-33
1.5 34 n. 10
1.9 337
2.1-6 337
2.21-31 334
3.13 335, 337
3.21-31 336 n. 31, 399
3.30 334
3.31 334
4.21 337
5.1 334
5.12 337
5.15 337
6 334
6-11 333
7.2 334
8.18 336
9.39 336
9.40 336
11.13 335
11.17 335
11.19 337
Aurelian (Pseudo-Spartians), 1-2 26

Barnabas

4:1 163
14:5-8 338
Baruch, Syriac, 11.1 241-42
1 Clement
5:4-7 258
5:7 310
24-26 430
Cohortatio ad Graecos (Justin)
16 514
37-38 514-15
Commandments (Hermas), 3.1-2 541-42
Commentary on John (Origen)
2.6 88 n. 66
10.4 544
10.11 88 n. 66
Commentary on Matthew (Origen), 10.17 486
Contra Celsum (Origen)
1.28-29 338
1.32-38 338
4.18 542
4.19 543
7.53 516

7.56 517
Contra Faustum (Augustine)
17.1 275
28.4 275, 456
32.2 74
33.6 92, 117, 145
3 Corinthians
5-6 428
9 428
10-13 158
10-15 428
16 428
19.3 428
24 428
26 430
26-32 428
34-37 428
De baptismo (Tertullian), 17 59, 84, 133, 379, 383
De consensu evangelistarum (Augustine), 1.10 75, 92, 104, 140
De cultu feminarum (Tertullian), 1.3.1 72, 86, 140
De gestus Pelagii (Augustine), 1.19 75, 140
De perpetua virginitate beatae 121

Mariae adversus Helvidium, 19
De sacerdotio (Chrysostom), 1.6-8 545-46
De viris illustribus (Jerome)
1 74, 75, 139
2 285
2.2 74
25 90, 139
4 75, 90, 142, 299
5 440
7 278, 380
9 48
12 101, 520
58 90
Dialogue with Trypho (Justin)
19.3 344
43 338
53.5 326
66-67 338
77-78 338
78 486
84 338
85.2 326
97.3 326
106.3 118, 324–25,

326, 326 n. 8

Didache

11-13 400

15 400

16 167

Didascalia Apostolorum

1.4.7-10 348

2.14.9 346

2.20.1 347

2.26.7 347

2.39.1 347

2.60.2 349

2.60.3 349

2.60.4 349

3.1.1 389

3.2.2 389

3.5.1 389

3.6 389

3.7.3-4 389

3.8 389

3.9 389

3.9.1-2 389

3.12.1-3 389

3.13.4-5 347

5.5.3 349

5.7.25-26 347

5.14.1-5 347

5.14.11 347
5.14.22 348
5.14.23 349
5.16.1 349
5.17.1 347, 388
5.18.1 388
5.20.9 388
5.20.10 388
6.5.1-4 347
6.8 349
6.9 347
6.10.1 349
6.10.3-4 349
6.12.1 347, 349
6.12.3 344 n. 51
6.13.1 347
6.13.2 350
6.15-23 348
6.15.3-4 348
6.16.6 348
6.16.9 349
6.17.1 349
6.18.9 349
6.18.10 349
21 388
Ecclesiastical History (Eusebius)
1.9 140, 353

2.2.1–2 358
2.2.2 59
2.23.25 74, 89
3.2.5 32 n. 8
3.3 32 n. 8, 48, 143
3.3.1–4 89
3.3.2 89
3.5 544
3.25 74, 75
3.25.6–7 91
3.28 75, 76
3.38 75
3.38.4 89
4.7.6–7 75
4.22.9 76
4.23.12 63
5.20 67
5.28 50
6.12 90
6.14 49
6.20.3 76
6.25 139
6.25.8 88 n. 66
6.25.10 88 n. 66
6.25.11 74
6.25.11–14 88
7.25 48, 75, 76, 139, 142

7.25.7 89
9.2–3 518
9.5 352
1 Enoch
14-15 303
68.1 73
81.1-5 73
2 Enoch
10 73
13 73
Ephesians
1 470, 473
3 472, 474
5 474, 477, 479
7 472, 473
9 470
10 470
12 469
16 471
18 474
Epistles (Augustine)
28.3 546
40.3 547
59.2 75
93.38 75
153.14 101, 520
Epistles (Basil)

129.1 75
224.1 75
Epistles (Jerome), 102.1 75, 83
Epistula Apostolorum
11 438
12 438
14.34–35 438
19 438
21 438
24 438
25 438
26 438
29 438
38 438
138.21–22 438
139.33–37 438
2 Esdras, 14.45 343
3 Ezra
6.7–22 71
6.24–27 71
6.27–34 71
8.9–24 71
4 Ezra
3.1–2 241–42
3.28 241–42
3.31 241–42

Hadrian (Pseudo-Spartianus), 1.6 26
Hero (Pseudo-Ignatius)
1 479
2 472
3 479
6 472, 473
History of Joseph the Carpenter, 30.7 67
Homilies (Pseudo-Clement)
2.15-18 315
17.13-19 316-17
20.7 458
Institutions (Lactantius), 4.15.26 517
Job Commentary (Julian)
24.14 465
37.22-23 465
292.3 465
299.2 465
Laodiceans
3 442, 444
4 444
4-5 442
5 442, 444

6-7 444
8 444
10 442

1 Maccabees
5-23 71
12.2 71
12.7-9 101
14.20-23 71

Magnesians (Ignatius)
3 479
5 469
6 470, 476
7 477
8 470, 472, 477
9 480
10 470, 480
11 476, 479
12 470

Martyrdom of Marian and James
1.2-4 505
2.1 505
4.3 505
6 505
9-10 505

Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius

1.1 506
2.1 506
3.1 506
12 506
Martyrdom of Pionius
1.2 504
4.8 504
4.11 504
13.2 504
22.2-4 505
Martyrdom of Polycarp
1.2 499
2.2 497
2.2-4 494
3 500
3.21-31 494
5.2 496, 499
6.2 500
7.1-3 499
8.1 500
8.3 498
9.1 498
15.1-2 498
15.2 496
16.1 494
16.2 495

17.2 500
17.2-3 496
18.2 496
20.2 493
21 496, 499
22 496
22.2-3 494
Melchizedek tractate
1.1-5 432
5.1-11 432
5.17-19 432
Paraphrase of Shem
1.1-19 405
30.4-31.14 405
34.16-36.24 405
36.25-38.28 405
40.12-15 406
Paul and Seneca, Letters of
Letter 1 521
Letter 2 521
Letter 7 521
Letter 9 522
Letter 11 522
Letter 13 522
Peter, gospel of
6 330

6-10 329
7 330
12 326
17 329
25 329, 330
26 271, 329
26-27 328
27 330
28 329
45-49 329-330
50 330
58 330
59-60 271
Peter to Philip, letter of
8.2 409
8.139.21-22 411
Philadelphians (Ignatius)
1 472
2 472
3 471
4 471, 472, 474, 477
5 473
6 472, 474, 479
7 472, 473
11 474

Philip, gospel of, 73.19-23 417
Philippians (Pseudo-Ignatius)
2 478
4 465, 476
5 478
7 477
11 465
13 480
Pistis Sophia, 1.43 412
Polycarp (Ignatian), 3 476
Preparatio Evangelica (Eusebius)
9.31-32 71
9.33-34 71
Protevangelium Jacobi
1-17 486-87
1.1 490
1.28 489-490
1.32 489-490
1.39 489-490
6.2 490
7.2 490
7.3 490
8.1 490

9.2 488, 490
10.1-2 490
11.2-3 492
12.1 490
14.2 490
15-16 490
17.1 490
17.2 488
18 486
18-20 487
20.3 493
21.2 490
22-24 487
25 486, 488
Recognitions (Pseudo-Clement)
1.27-71 318-20
1.59 343 n. 50
1.66-71 314-15
3.2-11 459
Romans (Ignatius)
8 470
9 470
Romans Commentary (Origen), 10.31 48
Severus Chronicle (Sulpicius Severus), 2.17.2 71

Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 2.4 514

Sibylline Oracles

Book I 510-11

1-4 510

324-400 510-11

Book II 510, 511

Book III

11-12 514

721-73 514

Book IV, 24-30 514

Book VI 513-14

11 512

21 512

22-28 512

Book VII 519

64-90 513

127-28 513

132-38 519

140 513

Book VIII 510, 511

217–50 511

218–19 511

227 511

228 511

249–50 512

296 512

300–301 512

305–8 512
324–28 512
Smyrneans (Ignatius)
1 473, 474
1.1–2 420
1.2 421
2 474
2.1 421
2.2 421
2.14.9 420
3.1–3 420
4.21 420
5 473
5.2 420
5.20.10 420
7 474, 477
7.1 420
9 474, 477, 479
Stromateis (Clement)
2.2 418
2.11 74, 76
2.52.6 193
5.12 277
5.14 418
7.9 542
7.16.93 486

7.53 542
Tarsians (Pseudo-Ignatius)
1 469
2 471
5 474
8 479
11 469
Thomas, gospel of
Saying 1 340, 341
Saying 3 231–32
Saying 6 338–39
Saying 13 412
Saying 14 339–340
Saying 18 232–34
Saying 27 340–41, 416
Saying 29 415–16, 417
Saying 37 234–35, 416
Saying 39 341
Saying 40 341–42
Saying 43 342–43
Saying 49 233
Saying 51 235–36
Saying 52 343
Saying 53 343–44
Saying 56 416–17
Saying 80 417
Saying 87 417, 418

Saying 104 344 n. 51
Saying 110 417–18
Saying 112 418
Saying 113 236–37
Thomas the Contender, Book of
138.1 439
138.1–2 412
138.4 413
138.6–18 413
138.7–8 413
138.10–139.12 413
138.18 413
138.34 413
139.4–6 413
139.6 413
139.8–11 413
139.10 413
139.28–30 439
139.28–31 414
139.33–37 413, 414
140.3–4 414
140.21–24 414
140.25–26 414
141.5–8 439
141.14–15 414
141.16–18 415
141.19–143.7 415

141.32–34 415
142.2 415
142.26–143.7 413
142.28–35 415
142.42–143.7 415
143.9–145.1 414
143.10–11 414, 418, 439
143.12–13 414
145.1–8 414
145.8–10 439
145.8–14 414
145.11 413
Trallians (Ignatius)
1 471
6 472, 478
7 479
9.1–2 420
10.1 421
11 470, 479
War (Josephus), 1.26.3 71, 102

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

This **Subject** index includes general concepts, including a topical guide to ancient sources. For specific ancient sources organized by book, chapter and verse, refer to the **Ancient**

Sources index found on pages 575–589.

For modern scholars, refer to the **Modern Scholars** index found on pages 623–628.

ʿbamon, 30, 46
ʿbgar Correspondence
  anti-Jewish sentiments of, 152, 362–66
  anti-Manichaean sentiments of, 153, 455–58
  as apologia, 101–2
  authorship of, 2
  as counterforgery, 456
  on Didymus Judas Thomas, 230
  scholarly perspectives on, 4
ʿbraham, 72, 292, 296 n. 26, 482
ɔrostics, 127–28
ʿcts of Ignatius (Antiochene Version), 506–8
ʿcts of John, 411, 431, 433, 438
ʿcts of Paul
  authenticity of, challenged, 76
  authorship of, 379, 379 n. 17
  and 3 Corinthians, 426–27
  eschatological theme of, 236
  as fabrication, 379–80
  on lion incident, 381, 382
  motivation of author, 132–33
  and Pastoral epistles, 379–84, 382 n. 21
  and 2 Timothy, 381
ʿcts of Paul and Thecla, 76, 84

Acts of Peter, 60, 75, 89, 143
Acts of Peter and Paul, 360
Acts of Philip, 398
Acts of Pilate (Christian version), 350–58
as apologia, 101, 153, 354–58, 483, 484–85
dating of, 353, 353 n. 71
and Letter of Herod to Pilate, 361
patristic references to, 351–53
as refutation of pagan version, 105, 354, 355, 357, 485
Acts of Pilate (pagan version)
Christian refutation of, 105, 354, 355, 357, 485
Eusebius on, 140, 352–53, 354, 484
historical problems in, 140
and persecution of Christians, 352–53, 354, 357
Acts of the Apostles, 263–82
and Acts of Ignatius, 507
as apologia, 481–83
on apostolic harmony, 257–58, 307
authorship of, 88, 264, 265, 267, 268, 276, 277–80, 278 n. 107, 282, 425
and Barnabas, 317
on crucifixion, 418
as embedded forgery, 264–65
eyewitness claim of, 270 n. 81, 270–79, 280
fabrications present in, 59–60
on Herod Agrippa, 361, 488
and illiteracy of Peter, 245 n. 23
and James, 263–64, 288, 307
on Jerusalem conference, 257, 263–64, 307, 391–92
and Jewish identity, 288
and Jewish Law, 263, 281, 288
Letter to the Galatians compared to, 257
and Letters of Paul and Seneca, 521
narrative voice in, 265–66, 266 n. 64, 268–279, 270 n. 79, 280, 280 n. 111

as non-pseudepigraphic forgery, 149
on Paul's authority, 152, 264, 280–82
on Paul's ministry, 202, 263, 280
and persecution of Christians, 241, 257–58, 482
and Peter, 263–64, 307, 315 n. 71
and Peter–Paul relationship, 251 n. 41, 257, 262, 263–64, 267, 281, 297, 307, 308
purposes of, 280–82
and Recognitions counterforgery, 313, 314, 318–20, 319 n. 82
and source documents of author, 267–69
and substitutionary atonement, 253
on suffering, 257–58, 263
and 1 Timothy, 373 n. 8
and Timothy (Paul's associate), 210
writing style of, 265–66, 266 n. 64, 268 n. 70, 268–70
ıcts of Thecla, 60, 384, 495
ıcts of Thomas, 230, 390 n. 43
ıdamantius, 49
ıddai Legend, 457–58, 458 n. 17
dmissions of guilt, 93 n. 2
doptionists and adoptionism, 5, 50, 60, 472, 491, 493
ıdversus Fulgentium Donatistam (Augustine), 51 n. 54
ıdversus Haereses (Irenaeus), 58
ıdversus Helvidium (Jerome), 121
ıdversus Marcionem (Tertullian), 142
ıdversus omnes haereses (Tertullian), 51, 149
ıeschines, 53, 70, 70 n. 2
ıeschylus, 66
ıkhmim fragment
of Apocalypse of Peter, 272, 445–46
of Gospel of Peter, 326, 327, 327 n. 8
ılcibiades (Antisthenes), 53
ılexander (opponent of Paul), 380
ılexander, Lucian's infamous "False Prophet," 99, 125

ıexander, son of Herod, 71, 85, 99
ıexander the Great, 71, 99, 101
ıexandria Library, 80, 97
ıexandrians, 2, 75, 91, 149, 150
llegiances in Jewish culture, 39–42
ıllegory of the Cave, 414
llonymity, 33 n. 8, 212 n. 32
llopigraphy, 33 n. 8, 212 n. 32
ımbrosiaster, 81
ımmonius, 79
ıos, 70
ınabasis (Themistogenes), 30
nachronisms and historical problems, 139–140
ınaphora Pilati, 358–59, 360, 361
ınastasius, Pope, 83
ınaximenes, 102
ındrew, 271, 328, 397, 438
ınecletus, 310
ngels
in Epistle of Jude, 303 n. 49, 303–5
in Letter to the Colossians, 180–81, 261, 304
nonymous writing, 49–50
false attributions of, 30, 50–52, 75
prevalence of, 1
and redactional forgeries, 34–35
nti-christs, 419–420
nti-Jewish sentiments and forgeries, 323–66
Abgar Correspondence, 152, 362–66
Acts of Pilate, 350–58
Anaphora Pilati, 358–59, 360, 361
Apocalypse of Paul, 453–54
Ascension of Isaiah, 332–38
Didascalia Apostolorum, 152, 344–50
Gospel of Peter, 152, 324–32

Gospel of Thomas, 338–44, 344 n. 51
and Jesus, 328–332, 337, 338–44, 344 n. 51, 354–58
Letter of Herod to Pilate, 361–62
Letter of Pilate to Claudius, 359–61
Letter of Pilate to Herod, 362
Letter to the Hebrews, 323 n. 2
ntinomianism, 301–3, 303 n. 48, 304, 305
ntioch incident
conflict in, 257, 261 n. 61, 264
Galatians on, 257, 307, 308, 316, 543
and Homilies, 316
and Jewish identity, 287
and Jewish Law, 261–62, 307, 308
and Johnson's case, 290
ntiochians (Pseudo-Ignatius)
on church offices, 463
polemical targets of, 476, 479
scholarly perspectives on, 462
techniques of forgers in, 469
theological investments of, 470
theological perspectives in, 471–73
Ussher's exposure of, 461
ntisthenes, 44, 70
ntonius Gnipho, 108
ntony, 99
pion, 144
pocalypse of Adam, 20
Apocalypse of James, 284, 409, 531
Apocalypse of James, 284, 409, 531
pocalypse of John
and Ascension of Isaiah, 336–37
authenticity of, challenged, 75, 76
and criteria for authentication, 142
curse in conclusion of, 66

Dionysius on, 88–89
eschatological theme of, 167, 229
and homonymity issue, 48
prophecies of, 74 n. 16
writing style of, 139
Apocalypse of Paul
afterlife narrative of, 453 n. 137
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 453–54
authorship of, 2
dating of, 451–52, 453 n. 138
on the flesh, 153, 451–54
techniques of forgers in, 123, 125
Apocalypse of Peter
afterlife narrative of, 447–48
Akhmim fragment, 272, 445–46
authenticity of, challenged, 75
authorship of, 2, 449–51
as counterforgery, 447
and criteria for authentication, 89, 143
dating of, 445, 446–47
discovery of, 445, 445 n. 110
on the flesh, 153, 449, 450–51
and Gospel of Mark, 447
and Gospel of Peter, 445
narrative voice in, 272, 274
polemics of, 449, 454
techniques of forgers in, 123
Apocalypse of Peter, Coptic
accounts of Jesus in, 225, 401–4
anti-institutional polemic of, 401–4, 404 n. 99
dating of, 401, 404 n. 100
eschatological theme of, 403–4
on false teachers, 411–12
on the flesh, 152, 407–12, 450–51

and Gospel of Mark, 408
narrative voice in, 272, 274
and 1 Peter, 408
and 2 Peter, 403 n. 94, 403–4, 408
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 41–42
pocalypses
anti-apocalyptic message of Thomas, 230–37
authorial attribution of, 73
extent of forgeries among, 149
Jewish apocalypses, 72 n. 10, 72–74
and motivations of forgers, 335
as renewal of creation, 232–34, 234–35
techniques of forgers in, 123
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 41
See also specific apocalypses
ꞌpocalypses of Adam, 19
pocryphal writings
Apocryphal Acts, 60
Apocryphon of James, 272, 284, 306, 404 n. 99
Apocryphon of John, 272, 274, 437, 531
extent of forgeries among, 149
ꞌpollinarians and Apollinarianism, 64–65, 393, 464, 467, 478, 478 n. 72
ꞌpollo, 99, 125
pologia, 481–527
on behavior of Christians, 483–84
on Judaism, 100–101, 482–83
as motivation of forgers, 100–102, 102 n. 36
on suffering, 483, 484
term, 482 n. 1
works of apologia
Acts of Ignatius (Antiochene Version), 506–8
Acts of the Apostles, 481–83
1 Apology, 325, 326, 351, 542
2 Apology, 508

Apology of Apuleius, 141
Apology to Anastasius, 65
Christian Creations, 512–13
Christian Interpolations, 510–12
Letters of Paul and Seneca, 520–27
Martyrdom of Marian and James, 505–6
Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius, 506
Martyrdom of Pionius, 504–5
Martyrdom of Polycarp, 153, 483, 493–502
Passion of Perpetua, 502–4
1 Peter, 483–84
Protevangelium Jacobi, 60, 153, 485–93
Sibyllina as apologetic forgeries, 513–19
Apology (Justin), 325, 326, 351, 542
Apology (Justin), 508
postles
absolution of, 482
Antioch incident (*see* Peter–Paul relationship)
apostolic succession, 16, 321, 531–32
authority of, 120, 378–79, 385, 386, 531–32
and church offices and hierarchy, 378–79
and Jerusalem conference
alignment of apostles at, 257, 263–64, 307
Didascalia Apostolorum on, 345 n. 55, 347, 349, 391–92
discrepancies regarding, 267
motivations for, 347, 349
and Paul, 257, 263, 267, 281
the twelve, 15
and unity in church leadership, 257–59, 263
writings of
appearance of forgeries among, 2
and authorial spirit of God, 38–39
authority of, 87–88, 120 n. 92, 120–21, 143, 532
fabrications in, 59

lineage considerations, 143–45
post-death appearance of, 82
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 40
See also Apostolic Constitutions; Didascalia Apostolorum
See also specific apostles, including James, Paul *and* Peter
Apostolic Canons, 152, 391
Apostolic Church Order, 152, 396–98, 397 nn. 77–79
Apostolic Constitutions
apostolic authority of, 391, 395
Arian doctrines in, 393–95
authorship of, 14–16, 150, 394–96, 463, 464–65
on bishop succession, 311
character of, 391–93
on church organization and leadership, 152, 390–96
component texts of, 14, 55, 390–91
condemnation of forgery by, 16 n. 16, 17–19, 18 n. 23
as counterforgery, 151
dating of, 392
narrative voice in, 273
plagiarism case for, 14, 55, 384, 384 n. 25
polemics of, 385–86, 395
redactional analysis of, 392
scholarly perspectives on, 4
on Sibylla, 515
techniques of forgers in, 126
theology of, 393–95
warnings against forgeries in, 16 n. 16, 16–19, 126, 150, 395–96
Apostolic Tradition, 14, 55, 384, 387–88
Apuleius, 103–4, 167
Araspes the Lover of Panthea (Celer), 138
Archippus, 174
Archytas the Tarentine, 109
Arian, 119
Arianism

in Apostolic Constitutions, 393–95
in Job Commentary, 394, 464, 465–66, 475, 478–79
of Julian, 464, 466 n. 52, 467–68, 474–75, 476, 478, 479
in Pseudo-Clementine writings, 458–460
in Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 153, 394, 466, 467, 468, 474–75, 479
term, 474–75, 475 n. 62
ʌristaeus of Proconnesus, 50
ʌristeas, Letter of, 66, 71, 100
ʌristippus, 44, 70
ʌriston of Chios, 47
ʌriston of Smyrna, 248
ʌriston the Peripatetic, 47
ʌristophanes, 47, 53–54
ʌristotle, 79, 135
ʌristotle the Younger, 110
ʌrius, 466, 475, 475 n. 62
ʌrius, King of Sparta, 100–101
ʌrrian, 115
ʌrtemilla, 381
ʌscension of Isaiah
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 337–38
authorship of, 34 n. 10, 264, 334–35, 337
on church-related topics, 152
as counterforgery, 400
embedded forgery in, 34, 264, 334–35
on leadership of Christian community, 398–400, 399 n. 87
sources of, 333–34
on status of Jews, 152
techniques of forgers in, 123
themes of, 332–33
theology of, 335–37
writing style of, 334
ʌsclepeius, 99, 125
ʌsconius, 99, 102

ıthanasius, 64–65, 75, 82, 544–45
ıthenaeus, 47, 50–51, 84
ıthenodorus, 62, 84, 118
ıtieus Philologus, 108
ttitudes toward forgery
  as accepted literary practice, 78–79
  of authors, 66–67, 81–83
  of critics and intellectuals, 118
  in honoring one's patron, 118, 532
  and intellectual property, 78–81
  as lies and deceits, 29, 85, 134–35, 532
  and morality questions, 546
  and terms for forgery, 29–32, 85
ıugustine
  on absence of writings by Jesus, 365
  Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam, 51 n. 54
  on Apocalypse of Paul, 452
  and apologetic forgeries, 101
  and authenticity disputes, 75
  on authority of canonical Gospels, 120, 120 n. 92
  on books of the Hippocratic corpus, 86–87, 117
  City of God, 516, 519
  Contra Felicianum Arianum, 51 n. 54
  Contra mendacium, 535–37
  and criteria for authentication, 91–92, 140, 144–45
  De mendacio, 535–37
  on disputed authorship, 75
  and forged letters, 83, 140
  on Jesus' letter to Peter and Paul, 75
  on letters of Paul and Seneca, 520
  on lying, 134–35, 535–37, 542
  and Manichees, 456
  on motivations of forgers, 119
  oracles of, 509

on Passion of Perpetua, 502–3, 503 n. 58
prophylaxes of, 127
on scriptural integrity, 546–47
on Sibylline counterforgeries, 352–53
on Sibyls, 516
writings in name of, 2, 51, 51 n. 54, 121, 150, 167
ugustus, 99, 102, 509
ulus Gellius, 80, 119, 138
urelian (Pseudo-Spartians), 26
uthorial spirit of God, 38–39
uthority of authors, 85–92
authoritative tradition, 42
and discovery narratives, 125
and imperative of authenticity, 85–92, 117, 137
as justification of forgers, 133
and lines of descent, 143
as motive of forgers, 119–21, 150–51, 153

abylon, 241–42
aptism practices, 404–6
ar Hebraeus, 452
arcoph, 75
arnabas (apostle), 52, 263, 317–18
arnabas, Epistle of, 52, 75, 149, 163, 331–32, 338
arth, Markus, 176n41
artholomew, 397
aruch (biblical figure), 72, 73
aruch, Syriac, 241–42
asil, 2, 75, 150, 545
asil of Caesarea, 477
asilides, 75, 404, 461
asilides, gospel of, 411, 546 n. 41
astards, 32
Beggars" (Chionides), 50–51

Birth of Mary, 19, 20
bishops, 309–12, 387
Blessed Virgin letter, 460
Bodmer papyri, 426, 427
Book of the Watchers, 303
Book of Thomas the Contender, 152, 412–15, 413 n. 9, 418, 431, 439
Books of Seth, 19
Brontinus, 86
Brutus, 93 n. 2, 219, 219 n. 53

Cadmus of Miletus, 50
Caiaphas, 314
Callimachus, 80
canon, 2, 19, 32 n. 8, 89, 143–45
Capernaum, 245 n. 24, 245–46
Carpocratians, 23, 58
Cassian, John, 538–39
Castellius, 380
Catalogue of Ships, 62
Catilina, 99
Celer, 138
Celsus
  on Christian Sibylline Oracles, 84, 100, 516–17
  criticism of Christianity, 23, 60
  on deception by God, 542–43
  and Protevangelium Jacobi, 5, 151, 488, 489–91
Cephas, 287, 290, 397
Cercops, 86
Cerinthus, 75, 76, 142, 420, 436
character defamation, 102–4
Christian Acts of Pilate. *See* Acts of Pilate (Christian version)
Christian" identification and persecution, 241
Chrysostom, John
  on book of James, 284 n. 1

on deception, 135, 545–46
on Jewish holidays, 480
on Letter to the Laodiceans, 441
writings in name of, 51, 150, 532
Church History (Theodoret), 544
church orders, 384–98
about, 384–87
apostolic character of, 385, 386
appearance of forgeries among, 149–150, 152
on Easter celebrations, 388
polemical function of, 384–87
on the role of the bishop, 387
on women in the church, 388–90, 396–98
See also Apostolic Canons; Apostolic Church Order; Apostolic Constitutions; Apostolic Tradition; Didache; Didascalia Apostolorum; Epistula Apostolorum; Epistula Clementis
church organization and leadership related forgeries, 367–406
Acts of Paul, 379–384
on apostolic authority, 390–96
on baptism practices, 404–6
on charismatic-to-orthodox transition, 398–400
on church offices and hierarchy, 377 n. 15, 377–79
on Easter celebrations, 388
on false teachers, 369–74
Pastoral epistles, 152, 203–5, 208, 367–84, 400
on prophesy, 399, 400
on proto-orthodox leadership, 398–400, 401–4, 404–6
Pseudo-Ignatian letters on, 479
revelatory texts, 398–406
on the role of the bishop, 387
on women in the church, 374–77, 376 n. 15, 381, 383–84, 388–90, 396–98
See also church orders
Cicero

on discovery narratives, 125–26
on Epicurus, 103
politically-motivated forgeries, 99, 102
on rhetoricians' lies, 56, 541
and secretary hypothesis, 219–22
Cinaethon, 61
City of God (Augustine), 516, 519
Claudius I, 359–361
Clement of Alexandria
on Apocalypse of Peter, 446, 447
on the flesh, 418
on letter ascribed to Barnabas, 52
on Letter to the Hebrews, 49
on Luke's authorship of Acts, 277
on Mary, Mother of Jesus, 486
on Onomacritus, 61–62
and pagan criticism, 86
on Paul's deceptions, 542
on Sibyls and oracles, 516
on 1 and 2 Timothy, 74, 76, 193
Clement of Rome
and Apostolic Constitutions, 15–17, 19, 392, 393, 395
and authenticity disputes, 74–75, 76
and Barnabas, 317
and Epistula Petri, 305
and Hebrews, 88
ordination of, 309, 310 nn. 61–62
and Paul, 311, 318
and Peter, 309, 310, 310 n. 61, 311, 318
writings in name of, 1, 75, 144, 532
(*see also* Epistula Clementis; Homilies; Recognitions)
Clement
and Apostolic Constitutions, 17
authorship of, 75 n. 20

and 1 Corinthians, 430
false attribution of, 149
on the flesh, 430, 430 n. 67
on ministry of Paul, 309
on Peter–Paul relationship, 311
and unity in church leadership, 258
Clement, 17, 75, 89, 144
Clementine Octateuch, 150, 385
Cleobius, 18, 126, 349, 427–28
coauthorship theory, 212–13, 213 n. 39, 220–21
Codex Claramontanus, 447
Codex Fuldensis, 440
Cohortatio ad Graecos (Justin), 51, 149, 514–15
Colossae community, 178 n. 47, 180–81, 182, 261
Colossians, 171–182
on angel worship, 180–81, 261, 304
authorship of, 172–74
as counterforgery, 182
dating of, 155 n. 1
on deception, 541
as earliest forged writing, 171
Ephesians compared to, 172, 174, 183–84, 186, 188 n. 71, 189–190
Epistle of Jude compared to, 304
eschatological theme of, 152, 170 n. 30, 171, 176–77, 177 n. 42, 178, 181, 181 n. 53, 216, 228, 236, 262
evidence of forgery, 174 n. 39, 174–78, 178 n. 44
on false teachers, 179–82
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 105, 441, 443–44
and motivations of forgers, 106
and secretary hypothesis, 219, 220
theology of, 177
writing style of, 161, 162, 174–76, 176 n. 41, 183–85
Commentary on John (Origen), 71 n. 6, 544
Commentary on Matthew (Origen), 486

ommissioned writings, 221, 248
Concerning the Genuine and Forged Writings of Hippocrates" (Galen), 116–17
onferences (Cassian), 538–39
onstantine, 517 n. 85, 517–18, 530
ontra Celsum (Origen), 338, 516–17, 542–43
ontra Felicianum Arianum (Augustine), 51 n. 54
ontra mendacium (Augustine), 535–37
ontra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos (Basil of Caesarea), 477
ontroversies, forgeries arising from, 455–80
  Abgar Correspondence, 455–58
  Pseudo-Clementine literature, 458–60
  See also Pseudo-Ignatian letters
optic Apocalypse of Peter. *See* Apocalypse of Peter, Coptic
optic Gospel of Thomas. *See* Thomas, gospel of
opyists and recopying process, 61, 62 n. 82, 64–67
orinthian congregation
  apocalyptic concerns of, 155, 176
  church organization and leadership in, 400
  and 1 Clement, 311
  and 3 Corinthians, 427
  leadership in, 258
  opposition to Paul in, 216, 236, 281, 427
  organization of, 203–5
Corinthians
  absence of "borrowings" in, 160
  and 1 Clement, 430
  on conflicting viewpoints, 173
  and 3 Corinthians, 428–29
  Epistle of James compared to, 293 n. 19
  eschatological theme of, 151, 155, 163, 164–65, 178, 185, 216
  on false teachers, 207
  on the flesh, 431
  on foods, 208

on forgiveness of sins, 177 n. 43
and Gospel of Thomas, 232
interpolations in, 376–77, 377 n. 14
and intertextual interpretations, 376
on James (apostle), 290
on marriage and sexual relations, 372
narrative voice in, 271
on salvation, 187 n. 69
2 Thessalonians compared to, 171
and 1 Timothy, 376
on women in the church, 374–75, 376, 384
writing style of, 162, 176, 185
Corinthians
absence of "borrowings" in, 160
and 3 Corinthians, 428–29
on faith, 254, 299 n. 33
on forgiveness of sins, 177 n. 43
narrative voice in, 96, 271
on "Satan," 185 n. 67
writing style of, 162, 176, 185
Corinthians
and Acts of Paul, 426–27
and apostolic authority, 17
component texts of, 427, 427 n. 54
as counterforgery, 431
and Didascalia Apostolorum, 349
on false teachers, 215, 427–28
on the flesh, 152, 425–32, 430 n. 67
and Gospel of Mark, 430
intention to deceive in, 32
themes of, 427–28
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 40
Corpus Paulinum, 183
Council of Laodicea, 461

ounterfeit writings, 32
ounterforgery, definition of, 4, 27, 151
ritics and criticism
  and authority of authors, 85–92
  commonplace nature of, 50
  and criteria for authentication, 88–92
  detection of forgeries by, 137, 143
  and Ephesians, 188
  and extent of forgery phenomenon, 74–77
  motives of, 79, 85–86
  objections to forgery, 118
  practices of, 80 n. 43
ross Gospel, 328, 328 n. 14
urses, literary, 66–67
yprian, 25, 50, 75, 120, 128, 140, 506

amasus, 64
aniel (patriarch), 39, 40, 73
aniel, book of, 71, 73, 123, 140, 334–35
avid (patriarch), 79, 548
avid (sixth-century Christian Neoplatonist), 119
e baptismo (Tertullian), 59, 84, 133, 379, 383
e consensu evangelistarum (Augustine), 75, 92, 104, 140
e cultu feminarum (Tertullian), 72, 86, 140
e duplici martyrio (Cyprian), 25
e ecclesiastica theologia (Eusebius), 475, 477
e fato (Minucius Felix), 90
e gestus Pelagii (Augustine), 75, 140
e glandibus (Hippocrates), 143 n. 152
e libris propriis (Galen), 82, 121, 167, 306
e mendacio (Augustine), 535–37
e monarchia (Justin), 51, 149
e principiis (Origen), 65
e recta in deum fide (Adamantius), 49

)e sacerdotio (Chrysostom), 545–46
)e victu acutorum (Hippocrates), 116
)e viris illustribus (Jerome), 520
)ecalogue, 288, 345, 348
eceivers who were deceived, 11–14, 16–17, 19
eception. *See* lies and deception
)ecree of Artaxerses, 71
efamation of character as motivation of forgers, 102–4
)emas, 228 n. 75, 380, 381, 383
)emetrius of Magnesia, 47
)emetrius of Phaleron to Ptolemy II, Letter of, 71
)emocritus, 80, 119
)emosthenes, 138
)erdekeas, 405
)escent to Hades (Prodicus of Samos), 86
etection of forgeries, criteria for, 137–45
  anachronisms and historical problems, 139–40
  dogmatism, 141 n. 149
  established patterns of usage, 143–45
  internal inconsistencies and implausibilities, 140–41
  theological *Sachkritik*, 141–42
  writing style, 138–39
)euteronomy, 231, 320, 375
)eutero-Pauline letters
  authorship claims of, 173
  and Epistle of James, 295
  joint-composition theory of, 213
  and motivations of forgers, 106
  and Pauline school theory, 172, 172 n. 37, 173–74
  and 1 Peter, 248, 250, 252, 254, 255
  and secretary hypothesis, 218–22
  writing style of, 160–61, 162
  See also Colossians; Ephesians; 2 Thessalonians
)ialogue with Trypho (Justin), 324–26, 338, 344

Dictys of Crete, 123
Didache
anonymous authorship of, 50
and Apostolic Church Order, 396, 396 n. 72
authorship of, 55, 150
on church organization and leadership, 400
as component of Apostolic Constitutions, 14
polemical function of, 385–86
scholarly perspectives on, 385–86
Didascalia Apostolorum, 344–50, 387–90
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 152, 344–50
apostolic character of, 386 n. 34, 386–87
authorship of, 55, 150, 346 n. 60, 346–47
as component of Apostolic Constitutions, 14, 55, 391
as counterforgery, 390
dating of, 344
on Easter celebrations, 388
on Jewish Law, 347–50
polemical function of, 386
redactional analysis of, 344 n. 51, 345 n. 55, 345–46, 347–48
on the role of the bishop, 387
on women in the church, 388–90, 390 n. 43
Didymus Judas Thomas (brother of Jesus), 230, 412–15, 457, 458 n. 17
Didymus the Blind, 74, 223
Diogenes Laertius
and criteria for authentication, 139
on defamation of character forgeries, 102
on falsifying of writings, 62
on Heraclides Ponticus, 11–14, 53
on homonymity issues, 47
on incidence of forgery, 70, 81
on lecture-notes publications, 115
Lives of Eminent Philosophers, 70
on Socrates' paean, 104

on works written in Pythagoras' name, 108
)iognetus, Letter to, 50
)ionysius of Alexandria, 48, 76, 88–89, 139
)ionysius of Corinth, 63, 76, 84
)ionysius of Halicarnassus, 47, 50, 80, 127, 138, 139
)ionysius of Miletus, 138
)ionysius Spintharos, 12–14, 26, 103, 128
)ionysius the Areopagite, 1
)ionysodorus, 70, 104
)iophantus, 85
)iotimus, 84, 102–3
)iscourses of Epictetus, 119
iscovery narratives, 123–26
)iviniae Institutiones (Lactantius), 515
ocetism
and Akhmim fragment, 327
and Apocalypse of Paul, 454
and Apocalypse of Peter, 450
and Ascension of Isaiah, 335–36
and 3 Corinthians, 430–31
and Epistula Apostolorum, 434–36, 436 n. 82
and Gospel of Peter, 90, 142, 324, 327, 450
and Ignatius/Pseudo-Ignatius, 421
and 1 John, 419, 420, 421, 424
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 444
and Melchizedek tractate, 432–34
and Protevangelium Jacobi, 491–92
and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 467, 471, 472, 474
)octrina Addai, 101, 363, 364, 365, 455, 458 n. 17
)omitian, 301
)rusiana, 59

aster celebrations, 388
bion, 461

bionitism, 474
cclesiastes, 35, 40, 71 n. 6, 123, 264
cclesiastical History (Eusebius)
  anonymous text cited in, 50
  on deception, 544
  on persecution of Christians, 352, 353
  on Pilate, 358
  on Serapion's condemnation of Gospel of Peter, 90
  on Sibylline counterforgeries, 518
chtheitskritik, 79, 80, 84, 119, 137, 141 n. 149
den, life in, 235
geria, 364, 457
lias, 79, 112
liot, George (Mary Anne Evans), 30
mbedded forgeries, 34, 264–65
mpedocles, 54, 81, 115, 118
nnis, 48
noch (patriarch), 40, 72, 75, 86, 140
Enoch
  anachronisms and historical problems in, 140
  and criteria for authentication, 89–90
  and Epistle of Jude, 89–90, 142, 299, 300, 303
  survival of the flood, 72, 86, 140
  techniques of forgers in, 123
  tradition represented by, 73
Enoch, 73
  Ephesians (Ignatius)
  on church hierarchy, 479
  and Ignatian corpus, 462
  techniques of forgers in, 470
  theological perspectives in, 472, 473, 474, 477
  verisimilitudes in, 469
phesians (Pauline), 182–88
  Colossians compared to, 172, 174, 183–84, 186, 188 n. 71, 189–90

Epistle of Jude compared to, 304
eschatological theme of, 152, 170 n. 30, 182, 185–87, 186 n. 68, 187 n. 69, 216, 228, 236, 262
on "false teachings," 189
on forgiveness of sins, 177
on former life of Paul, 211
on grace vs. works, 185, 186, 187, 295, 302
intention to deceive in, 78, 188
on Jewish Law, 186–87, 295, 302
letter structure of, 185
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 440, 440 n. 97, 443
and motivations of forgers, 106
the people of Israel in, 189–90
polemics of, 189–90
and secretary hypothesis, 220
on truthfulness, 541, 547
writing style of, 122, 161, 162, 175, 182, 183–85, 252
pictetus, 115, 119
picureans, 107–8
picurus, 84, 102–3, 107–8, 115 n. 74
pigenes, 86
piphanius of Salamis
on Didascalia Apostolorum, 347
on disputed works, 75, 150
fabrications of, 19–24, 58
and Greater Questions of Mary, 19, 20–22, 23–24, 24 n. 33, 150
on Letter to the Laodiceans, 440, 444
on Melchizedekians, 434
Panarion, 19–24
on Phibionites, 19–24, 58, 75
pistles
and apologetic forgeries, 101
disputed statuses of, 75
epistolary novels, 43–45, 44 n. 30

extent of forgeries among, 149
See also specific epistles, such as James, epistle of
pistula Apostolorum
as counterforgery, 438–39
dating of, 435
on the flesh, 152, 434–39, 436 n. 82
pistula Clementis, 152, 308–12, 344, 384
pistula Petri, 305–8
on authority of Paul, 152
authorship of, 223
and Clement's Homilies, 305, 308
and 3 Corinthians, 431
and 2 Peter, 308
on Peter–Paul relationship, 290, 306–8
purpose of, 305–6
warnings against forgeries in, 127
rasmus, 25, 182, 522, 523
Esdras, 343
ster, book of, 71
ubula, 381
uclides, 70
unomius, 394
uripides, 66, 70
usebius
and Abgar Correspondence, 262–63, 366
and Acts of Pilate, 140, 352–53, 354, 484
on Acts of the Apostles, 278
anonymous works cited by, 50, 51
on Apocalypse of Peter, 75, 447
and Arianism, 475, 475 n. 63
on Barnabas, 75
on 2 Clement, 75
and criteria for authentication, 89, 140, 142, 143–44
critics and criticism, 91

on curses, 66–67
De ecclesiastica theologia, 475, 477
on disputed works, 74–75, 76
on Epistle of James, 74, 285
on Epistle of Jude, 74, 298–301
fabrications reiterated by, 59
on Hegesippus, 76
and Homilies, 320–21
and Ignatius letters, 461, 462
on James (apostle), 288
on Letter to the Hebrews, 76
on Marcellus, 477–78
on morality of deception, 538
on Papias, 229
on 2 Peter, 74, 223
and Pilate cycle works, 358
on Polycarp's martyrdom, 495
Preparatio, 538
on Prophecies of Barcabbas and Barcoph, 75
and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 461, 462, 468
on Revelation, 76, 142
on Serapion and the Gospel of Peter, 90–91, 324
on Shepherd of Hermas, 32 n. 8, 48, 75
on Sibyls and oracles, 517–18
See also Ecclesiastical History
vans, Mary Anne (George Eliot), 30
ve, gospel of, 19, 150
xcursus, 218–22
xodus, 135, 547
yewitness testimony, 270 n. 81, 270–79
zekiel (prophet), 70
zra, 72, 73, 343
Ezra, 71
Ezra, 241–42

abrications, 24 n. 33, 55–61, 84, 133
aith
  and antinomianism, 303 n. 48, 304, 305
  apostles on
    James, 307
    Paul, 261, 294–95, 307
    Peter, 307
  faith vs. works, 185–87, 261, 288–95, 302, 307, 444
  texts on
  2 Corinthians, 254, 299 n. 33
  Ephesians, 185, 186, 187, 295, 302
  Epistle of James, 288–89, 290–91, 292–93, 294–95
  Epistle of Jude, 299, 299 n. 33
  Galatians, 299 n. 33, 307
  Laodiceans, 444
alse attributions, 49, 50–52, 75, 149, 534 n. 14
alsifications, 61–67, 84, 120
austus, 74, 92, 140–41, 275
avorinus, 139
ction, 133–34, 134 n. 133, 248 n. 31, 533, 533 n. 8
g tree parable, 446
First Peter in Recent Study" (Boring), 253
rst-person narratives, 123
esh, 407–54
  desires of, 413–15
  false teachings on, 409, 411–12, 427–28, 429, 429 n. 66
  forgeries celebrating
    Apocalypse of Paul, 451–54
    Apocalypse of Peter, 445–51
    3 Corinthians, 425–32
    Epistula Apostolorum, 434–39
    1 John, 419–25
    Letter to the Laodiceans, 439–45
    Melchizedek tractate, 432–34

forgeries opposing
Book of Thomas the Contender, 412–15
Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 407–12
Gospel of Thomas, 415–18
and Gnosticism, 23, 24, 406, 411, 432–34, 437
internecine conflicts on, 152
of jesus
Apocalypse of Paul on, 454
Apocalypse of Peter on, 451
Coptic Apocalypse of Peter on, 407–12
3 Corinthians on, 428, 428 n. 57, 431
Epistula Apostolorum on, 434–39
1 John on, 419–25
Protevangelium Jacobi on, 492–93
Jesus' lessons on, 412–15, 449, 450–51
and the material world, 415–18
and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 471
and resurrection, 407, 427–31, 430 n. 67, 434–39, 451, 454
and salvation, 408, 409, 416, 421, 428, 431, 439, 444, 451
lorinus, Letter to (Irenaeus), 272–73, 274
ɔrgers
condemnation of forgery by, 27
in Apostolic Constitutions, 16 n. 16, 17–19, 18 n. 23
Epiphanius on the Phibionites, 19–24
as forgery technique, 126–27
in 2 Thessalonians, 24–25
justifications of, 132–37, 548
motivations of, 97–105
apologia, 100–102, 102 n. 36
authority of authors, 119–21, 150–51, 153
in condemning forgeries, 18
and deceptive intentions of forgers, 131–32, 150–51
defamation of character, 102–4
humility of students, 105

Olympiodorus on, 112
political and religious authorization, 98–99
profitability, 97–98
Salvian's defense, 93–96
supplementation of a tradition, 104–5
validation of one's views, 119–21
penalties suffered by, 83–85, 132
reactions to, 83–85, 118, 132
techniques of, 121–28
and deceptive intentions of forgers, 131–32
first-person narratives, 123
imitation of style, 121–22
interpolations, 128
material and literary prophylaxes, 127–28, 131
verisimilitudes, 122–23
warnings against forgeries, 126–27
ɔrgery
attitudes toward
as accepted literary practice, 78–79
of authors, 66–67, 81–83
of critics and intellectuals, 118
in honoring one's patron, 118, 532
and intellectual property, 78–81
as lies and deceits, 29, 85, 134–35, 532
and morality questions, 546
and terms for forgery, 29–32, 85
criteria for detection of, 137–45
anachronisms and historical problems, 139–40
dogmatism, 141 n. 149
established patterns of usage, 143–45
internal inconsistencies and implausibilities, 140–41
theological *Sachkritik*, 141–42
writing style, 138–39
definition of, 1n. 1, 30–31

extent of phenomenon, 1, 69–77, 149–50
fiction compared to, 133–34, 134 n. 133, 533
and intellectual property, 78–81
and intention to deceive, 30–31, 128–32, 533–34
justifications for, 132–37, 548
morality of, 546–48
multifunctionality of, 4–5, 151
objection to term, 29, 32, 32 n. 9
related phenomena, 43–67
anonymity, 49–50
fabrications, 55–61
false attributions, 50–52
falsifications, 61–67
homonymity, 47–49
literary fictions, 43–45, 45 n. 35
pen names, 45–47
plagiarism, 52–55
scholarly perspectives on, 31 n. 6, 35–43, 78–79, 105–7, 106 n. 53, 107 n. 54
terms for, 29–32, 85
types of
embedded forgeries, 34
non-pseudepigraphic forgeries, 35
redactional forgeries, 34–35
ourth Oration against the Arians (Pseudo-Athanasius), 477
ronto, 23
ukhajawaqa, 110

aius of Rome, 76
alatians
and Acts of the Apostles, 257
on Antioch incident, 257, 307, 308, 316, 543
on the apostles, 257, 259, 259 n. 59
and authority of Paul, 152, 281
and coauthorship theory, 213 n. 39

and conversion of Paul, 257, 267
on crucifixion, 418
and Epistle of James, 291–93
eschatological theme of, 163
on faith, 299 n. 33, 307
on forgiveness of sins, 177 n. 43
on James (apostle), 487
and Jewish identity, 287
and Jewish Law, 304, 307
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 439, 442, 443, 445
and Letter to the Romans, 160
oath in, 207
on Peter, 250
on suffering, 259 n. 59
2 Thessalonians compared to, 171
on women in the church, 383
writing style of, 162, 175–76, 185
Galen
"Concerning the Genuine and Forged Writings of Hippocrates," 116–17
and criteria for authentication, 143 n. 152
criticism of, 80, 80 n. 43
De libris propriis, 82, 121, 167, 306
detection of forgeries, 138
on exercising caution with books, 306
forgeries among surviving texts, 82
on Heraclides Ponticus, 13
on Hippocratic corpus, 80, 116–17
on market for forgeries, 97–98
reaction to forgeries, 82, 167
writing style of, 82, 121, 138
Galilee, 243–46
Gamaliel, 314
Gelasian Decree, 447, 452, 486
Genesis

on Abraham's deception, 135, 547
on Adam and Eve, 235, 376
cited by Eusebius, 321
cited in James, 292, 296 n. 26
on Isaac's deception, 135
on Jacob's deception, 547
genuine religious pseudepigraphy" category of forgery, 36–38, 37 n. 15
Germanicus, 500
Glaucon, 70, 81
Gnostics and Gnosticism
and Acts of John, 411
and Apocalypse of Peter, 447
and Book of Thomas the Contender, 412–13
and Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 407–12
in Corinthian congregation, 430 n. 68
and 3 Corinthians, 429–30, 430 n. 68
and Didascalia Apostolorum, 349
Epiphanius' condemnation of, 19–24
and Epistula Apostolorum, 435–38
and fabrications, 58
on the flesh, 23, 24, 406, 411, 432–34, 437
and Melchizedek tractate, 432–34
and Paraphrase of Shem, 404–6
and Pastoral epistles, 192, 368 n. 3, 370, 371–72
and 2 Peter, 226
and Peter, 402–4
Phibionites, 19–24, 58
and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 467, 471–72, 474
and 2 Timothy, 214
God
authorial spirit of, 38–39
deceptions of, 135–36, 548
Gospel of Perfection, 19
Gospels

anonymous authorships of, 50, 51, 52, 75
assignment of attributions to, 51–52
authenticity disputes of, 74, 75
extent of forgeries among, 149
and two-source hypothesis, 51–52, 55
See also specific gospels, such as Thomas, gospel of *and* Luke, gospel of
race
and antinomianism, 301–3, 303 n. 48, 304, 305
in Epistle of Jude, 302–3, 303 n. 48
in Pauline forgeries, 186–87, 295, 302–3
reater Questions of Mary, 19, 20–22, 23–24, 24 n. 33, 150
reek Apocalypse of Peter, 42, 225, 232–33, 272
rossteste, Robert, 461

adrian, 26
alicarnassan, 50
ebrews
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 323 n. 2
authenticity of, challenged, 76
and authority of authors, 88
authorship of, 49, 118
on crucifixion, 418
eschatological theme of, 163
as non-pseudepigraphic forgery, 149
Origen on, 88, 88 n. 66, 118
writing style of, 139
ecataeus, 71
egesippus, 76, 288, 301, 321
eidelberg Papyrus, 426
eliodorus, 541
ell, 448
eraclides Ponticus, 11–14, 26, 47, 53, 103
eresiology, 19–24, 22 n. 29
eretics, 150

[ermagoras, 47
[ermas, 32 n. 8, 48–49
[ermes, 120 n. 92
[ermogenes, 228 n. 75, 380, 381, 383
[ero (Pseudo-Ignatius), 461, 462, 472, 473, 479
[erod, 85, 99, 102, 328–29, 485, 488
[erod Agrippa, 361
[erod Antipas, 358, 361–62, 488
[erodotus, 50, 61, 79, 84, 140
[eroides (Ovid), 44
[esiod, 37, 53, 80
[ezekiah, Testament of, 333
[ilduin of St. Denis, 26
[incmar of Rheims, 26
[ippocrates, 98, 116–17, 119, 143 n. 152, 144
[ippocratic corpus, 86–87, 116 n. 75, 116–17, 138
[ippodamus, 109
[ippolytus, 14, 50, 384
[istoria Augusta (Pseudo-Spartianus), 26, 45–46
istorical problems and anachronisms, 139–40
[istories (Polybius), 57
[istories (Timaeus), 54, 115
[istory of Joseph the Carpenter, 67
[istory of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides), 56
[oly Spirit, authorial spirit of, 38–39
[omer, 50, 53, 62, 79
[omilies (Pseudo-Clement)
    Arian perspective of, 458–460
    on authority of Paul, 152
    on authority of Peter, 309
    authorship of, 1, 150, 312
    as counter-counter history, 321
    dating of, 312 n. 63
    and Epistula Clementis, 308

and Epistula Petri, 305, 308
and Eusebius, 320–21
on Judaism, 332
and Paul, 312, 315, 316–18
polemics of, 315, 316–17
omonymity in authors' names, 30, 32, 47–49
losea, 250, 253
umility as motivation of forgers, 105
lymenaeus, 191, 372–73

ımblichus, 30, 46, 107, 110–11, 111 n. 64
ɔn Abi Usaybi'a, 109
gnatius of Antioch
on authority of apostles, 120
death of, 506–8
and flesh-of-Christ debates, 419, 421
letters of, 460
and Pseudo-Ignatius, 469–470
and purpose of Pseudo-Ignatian forgeries, 468
writings in name of, 1 n. 2, 2, 121, 150, 532 (*see also* Pseudo-Ignatian letters)
iad (Homer), 62
ıfancy Gospel of Thomas, 35, 60, 105, 273, 274
ıtellectual property, 78–81, 79 n. 34, 83
ıtention to deceive, 128–32
as inherent to forgery, 30–31, 533–34
scholarly perspectives on, 30 n. 3, 33 n. 8, 78, 178 n. 47

ıternecine conflicts, 151, 152, 282
ıterpolations, 128
ɔn of Chius, 79, 86
ɔhicrates, 139
ɾenaeus
on Abraham, 296 n. 26
Adversus Haereses, 58
authority of, 278 n. 107
on authorship of gospels, 51
on bishops of Rome, 310
on crucifixion, 546 n. 41
curses of, 66–67
and fabrications, 58
To Florinus, 272–73, 274
and Gnosticism, 22, 23
on Gospel of Basilides, 411
on heretical works, 76, 150
Johannine epistles cited by, 423
on Luke, 276–77, 279
narrative voice of, 272–73
on Peter–Paul relationship, 310 n. 62, 310–11
on Valentinians, 22, 58
ʂaac, 547
ʂaiah
authorship of, 70
martyrdom of, 332–33, 337
visions of, 333–38, 399, 399 n. 87
writings in name of, 264 (*see also* Ascension of Isaiah; Vision of Isaiah)
Isaiah, 2, 34, 34 n. 10, 39–40, 253, 338
Isaiah, 41, 70
Isaiah, 70
ʂidorus, 62
ʂocrates, 138

ıcob, 544, 547
ımes (apostle)
and Acts of the Apostles, 263–64, 288, 307
and Apostolic Constitutions, 15, 392
authority of, 5, 284, 296–97, 309
and Clement of Rome, 309
and Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 404 n. 99
and Epistula Clementis, 309
and Epistula Petri, 305, 307, 308
illiteracy of, 285–87, 287 n. 7
and Jerusalem conference, 257, 263–64
on Jewish Law and Jewish identity, 287–88
and leadership of the church, 404 n. 99
martyrdom of, 288
and Paul, 281, 288, 290, 296–97, 307, 315, 317
and Recognitions, 314–15
writings in name of, 284, 284 n. 1
1 Apocalypse of James, 284, 409, 531
2 Apocalypse of James, 284, 409, 531
Apocryphon of James, 272, 284, 306, 404 n. 99
Gospel of James, 75, 149
See also James, epistle of; Protevangelium Jacobi
ımes, epistle of, 286–297
attack on Paul in, 290–91, 291 n. 16, 294–95, 295 n. 23, 296–97
audience of, 284, 288
authenticity of, challenged, 74
authority of, 285
on authority of Paul, 152
authorship of, 33, 283–84, 285, 296–97
1 Corinthians compared to, 293 n. 19
as counterforgery, 290–91, 295
and criteria for authentication, 89, 144
on cultural identity, 287–88
dating of, 289–90

and Epistle of Jude, 298
evidence of forgery in, 285–290
on faith vs. works, 288–89, 290–91, 292–93, 294–95
false attribution of, 149
and Homilies, 320
and Jesus, 285, 287 n. 10
and Jewish Law, 287–89
Letter to the Romans compared to, 293 n. 19
literary dependence in, 291, 292–95
and 1 Peter, 297, 297 n. 28
and Recognitions, 320
scholarly debate on, 4
writing style of, 285–86
ames, gospel of, 75, 149
ames Liturgy, 284 n. 1
eremiah (prophet), 70, 136, 548
eremiah, book of, 136, 548
erome
on absence of writings by Jesus, 365
on Acts of Paul, 380
and apologetic forgeries, 101
authenticity disputes of, 74
authority of, 532
on authority of canonical Gospels, 120–21
on brothers of Jesus, 486
and criteria for authentication, 89–90, 139, 140, 142
De viris illustribus, 520
and defamation of character, 104
and detection of forgeries, 139
and disputed authorship, 75
on Epistle of James, 285
on Epistle of Jude, 299
on falsifications by Rufinus, 65
forged letters purportedly from, 82–83

on homonymity issues, 48
on Jude, 142
on Letter to the Laodiceans, 440
on letters of Paul and Seneca, 520
on Luke, 278
on 2 Peter, 223
on Peter–Paul relationship, 543
and secretary hypothesis, 223 n. 63
on Wisdom of Solomon, 71 n. 6
writings in name of, 2, 51, 51 n. 54, 121, 150, 167, 530–31, 532
erusalem conference
alignment of apostles at, 257, 263–64, 307
Didascalia Apostolorum on, 345 n. 55, 347, 349, 391–92
discrepancies on, 267
motivations for, 347, 349
esus
and Abgar Correspondence, 2, 4, 101–2, 363–65, 455, 456 n. 9, 456–57
absence of writings from, 365
alleged letter of, to Peter and Paul, 75, 91–92, 104, 140
and anonymous texts, 49, 50
and anti-Jewish texts, 328–32, 337, 338–44, 344 n. 51, 354–58
apocalyptic message of, 155, 228, 229, 232–35
and apologetic forgeries, 101–2
and Apostolic Church Order, 397
birth of, 486, 487, 489–91, 492–93
birthplace of, 351
brothers of, 5, 230, 412–15, 486 (*see also* James)
and Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 401–4, 404 n. 99
crucifixion of, 326, 328–32, 354–58, 359, 401, 408–12, 546 n. 41
deceptions of, 135, 548
fabrications about, 58–59, 60
on false teachers, 411–12
and fig tree parable, 446
the flesh, Jesus' lessons on, 412–15, 449, 450–51

the flesh of, debates on, 407–12, 419–25, 428, 428 n. 57, 431, 434–39, 451, 454
and Greater Questions of Mary, 20, 24
infancy stories of, 105
on the kingdom of God, 231–32
and leadership of the church, 404 n. 99
literacy and language skills of, 365, 456 n. 9
messianic line, deceptions in, 547–48
and Moses, 318, 320, 321
and Paul, 309
and Peter, 251, 309, 401, 411
and Pilate, 354–62, 484–85
Polycarp's parallels with, 494, 496, 499–500
and Protevangelium Jacobi, 489–91
Pseudo-Ignatian letters on, 476–78
Sibylline Oracles on, 510–11, 512–13, 514–15, 516–17
substitutionary atonement of, 253
suffering of, 177, 255 n. 54, 257, 408–11, 409 n. 3, 421
tour of realms of the dead, 447–48
and women in the church, 397
ɐwish Law
in Acts of the Apostles, 263, 281, 288
and anti-Jewish texts, 345, 346, 347–350
and Antioch incident, 261–62, 307, 308
and Didascalia Apostolorum, 347–50
in Ephesians, 186–87, 295, 302
and Epistula Petri, 306
and James, 287–89
in Letter to the Galatians, 304, 307
and Paul, 187, 206–7, 257, 261, 263, 267, 281, 288, 293, 295, 307
and 1 Peter, 257
and 2 Peter, 261
and Peter (apostle), 225, 257, 261, 306, 308, 332
and Recognitions, 314–15

and 1 Timothy, 206–7, 371–72, 373–74
ɛws and Judaism
and anonymity of works, 50, 70
apocalypses in, 72–74
and apologetic forgeries, 100–101, 482–83
authority of, 482
circumcision practices, 343–44
cultural identity of, 287–88
and Gospel of Thomas, 338–44, 344 n. 51
Hebrew Bible, 70–71
Ignatius/Pseudo-Ignatius on, 470, 479–80
Jewish scriptures, 250
and Letters of Paul and Seneca, 524–25
and Martyrdom of Pionius, 504
and Martyrdom of Polycarp, 494, 497, 500, 501–2
persecution of Christians, 482
and Peter, 332
and Pilate cycle works, 354–62
plagiarism in Jewish literature, 70–74
and Protevangelium Jacobi, 489–91
pseudonymity practices in, 72 n. 10, 72–74
and Recognitions, 314–15
sacrifices in, 319–20
Sibylline Oracles on, 510–11, 512, 519
as topic of scriptures, 152, 177
Vergegenwärtigung, 39–42
See also anti-Jewish sentiments and forgeries
ɔb Commentary (Julian), 394, 463–66, 474–76, 478, 479
ɔel, 503 n. 58
ɔhannine community, 260–61, 403
ɔhn
and Apostolic Church Order, 397
and authorship of Revelation, 88
fabrications about, 59

and homonymity issue, 48
Origen on writings of, 88 n. 66
writings in name of (*see* Acts of John; Apocryphon of John; John, gospel of; Revelation; 1 John; 2 John; 3 John)
ɔhn, gospel of
and Abgar Correspondence, 364, 457, 457 n. 12
apocalyptic message of, 228
and Ascension of Isaiah, 336–37
authorship of, 424 n. 38
on crucifixion, 357
on deception, 135
on Didymus Judas Thomas, 230
eschatological theme of, 231
and Gospel of Peter, 330
and Ignatius/Pseudo-Ignatius, 470
on Jesus' deception, 135, 548
on Jesus' writing, 365
on Jews and Judaism, 337
and 1 John, 419 n. 24, 425 n. 41
on Jude, brother of James, 297
narrative voice in, 270, 274
John
on antichrists, 419–20
audience of, 424
authorship of, 49, 199, 423–25, 424 n. 39
as eyewitness account, 422 n. 31, 422–24, 424 n. 39, 425
on the flesh, 419–25
and Gospel of John, 419 n. 24, 425 n. 41
narrative voice in, 271, 274
as non-pseudepigraphic forgery, 149
polemic of, 419–21
on suffering of Christ, 421
John
audience of, 424

authenticity of, challenged, 75
authorship of, 49, 50, 199, 423, 424 n. 39
and homonymity issue, 48
John
audience of, 424
authenticity of, challenged, 75
authorship of, 49, 50, 199
and homonymity issue, 48
ɔhn Philoponus, 98
ɔhn the Baptist, 361, 405, 485, 487
ɔhn the Presbyter, 48
ɔnah, 548
ɔnathan, 547–48
ɔseph, father of Jesus
and birth of Jesus, 273, 487, 489–90
and Epistle of James, 284
and Protevangelium Jacobi, 5, 273, 485, 486, 489–91
sons of, 5, 486, 488
vision of, 273, 486, 487
ɔseph of Arimathea, 356–57, 358
ɔsephus
on Abgar Correspondence, 456
on Acts of Pilate, 352–53
and apologetic forgeries, 100–101, 101 n. 30
on Capernaum, 245
and Eusebius, 321
fabrications in writing of, 58
literacy of, 244
narrative voice of, 274
on politically-motivated forgeries, 85, 99
ɔshua, 50, 135, 547
ɹba, king of Lybia, 98, 112, 114
ɹdas Iscariot, gospel of, 150, 411
ɹdas Thomas (brother of Jesus), 230, 412–15, 457, 458 n. 17

ude (apostle)
and Apostolic Church Order, 397
authority of, 297–98
obscure persona of, 298
ude, epistle of, 297–305
antinomian charges in, 301–3, 303 n. 48, 304, 305
authenticity of, challenged, 74–75
authority of, 298
authorship of, 149, 297–301
and criteria for authentication, 89–90, 142, 144
dating of, 299, 301
and 1 Enoch, 89–90, 142, 299, 300, 303
and Epistle of James, 298
evidence for forgery of, 298–301
on faith, 299, 299 n. 33
on Paul's authority, 152
and 2 Peter, 55, 224, 227
polemics of, 58, 300–305
scholarly perspectives on, 4, 299–300
writing style of, 298, 298 n. 30, 299–300
udges, 50
udgment of Peter, 75
ulian of Antioch
Arian inclinations of, 394–95, 464, 465–66, 466 n. 52, 467–68, 474–75, 476, 478, 479
authorship of Apostolic Constitutions, 394–96, 463, 464–65
authorship of Commentary on Job, 394, 463, 464–65
authorship of Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 394, 463, 465
dating writings of, 466
targets of, 474–78, 479–480
ulius Africanus, 140
ulius Caesar, 99
ustifications for forgery, 132–37, 548
ustin Martyr

on Acts of Pilate, 351
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 332, 338
on Apocalypse of Peter, 446
Dialogue with Trypho, 324–26, 338, 344
and Gospel of Peter, 324–27, 326 n. 6, 327 n. 8
Isaiah cited by, 338
on Jesus' birth, 486
on lying, 542
and Memoirs of Peter, 118, 324–26, 326 nn. 6–7, 327 n. 8
Oratio ad Graecos, 51, 149
and Pilate cycle works, 358
on Sibyl, 514
writings in name of, 51

Kings, 50
Kochba, Bar, 446

Lactantius, 512, 515, 517, 520, 537–38
language, anachronistic, 140
language skills. *See* literacy and language skills
Laodiceans
and apostolic authority, 17
authenticity of, challenged, 75
authorship of, 2, 149, 485
on the flesh, 153, 439–45
intention to deceive in, 32
and Letter to the Colossians, 105, 441, 443–44
and motivations of forgers, 105
and Muratorian Fragment, 75, 440, 440 n. 97, 441, 442, 443–44
and Philippians, 439, 442, 443, 445
rejection of, for Marcionite teachings, 91, 150
Lasus of Hermione, 61
lecture notes of philosophical schools, 114–15
Lesser Heracles (Antisthenes), 53
Lesser Questions of Mary, 19

ɛtter carriers, 249, 249 n. 38
ɛtters, forgery of, 82–83
ıiber antiquitatum biblicarum (Philo), 51
ıiber Graduum, 235
ıiber Heraclidis (Heraclides), 46
es and deception
attitudes toward, 134–35
biblical instances of, 135–36, 536, 543, 545, 547–48
and intent to deceive, 30 n. 3, 30–31, 33 n. 8, 78, 128–32, 178 n. 47, 533–34
justifications of, 132–37
lies condemned by liars, 16, 19
medicinal lies, 539–40, 542, 543, 545
morality of, 534–46
Augustine on, 134–35, 535–37, 542
Cassian on, 538–39
Christianity on, 541–46
Eusebius on, 538
Lactantius on, 537–38
Plato on, 135, 540–41, 542
Socrates on, 135, 539–41
and motivations of forgers, 131–32, 150–51
noble lies, 135, 136, 540–41
as type of forgery, 31–32
and will of God, 547
ıife of Apollonius (Philostratus), 138–39
ıife of Plotinus (Porphyry), 85
ıife of Pythagoras (Iamblichus), 111
nguistic arguments, 200
ınus, 310, 311
teracy and language skills, 242–46
and anti-Jewish texts, 343
composition skills, 242, 243, 244, 247, 286, 300 n. 35
illiteracy of James, 285–87, 287 n. 7

illiteracy of Jude, 299
illiteracy of Peter, 242–47, 245 n. 23
of Jesus, 365, 456 n. 9
and 1 Peter, 242–47
terary dependence
in Acts of Paul, 382–83
in Epistle of James, 291, 292–95
in Letter to the Ephesians, 183
in 1 Peter, 254
terary fictions, 43–45, 45 n. 35
terary form, pseudonymity as, 78–81, 128–29, 534
terary phenomena related to forgery, 43–67
anonymity, 49–50
fabrications, 55–61
false attributions, 50–52
falsifications, 61–67
homonymity, 47–49
literary fictions, 43–45, 45 n. 35
pen names, 45–47
plagiarism, 52–55
ittle Cyrus (Antisthenes), 53
ives of Eminent Philosophers (Diogenes Laertius), 70
ivy, 124–25
onginus, 361
ucian, 13, 98, 99, 125
ucius Aelius, 80
ucius Cotta, 48
ucius Gellius, 115
ucius Septimius, 124
uke
authority of, 117–18
biographical evidence for, 277–78, 278 n. 107
obscure persona of, 279–280
and Paul, 76, 117–18, 265, 267, 276–79

and source documents of Acts, 268
and two-source hypothesis, 55
writings of
Acts of the Apostles, 88, 265, 268, 277–78, 279
Gospel of Luke, 51–52, 76, 117–18, 277, 279
uke, gospel of
on acts of piety, 339
apocalyptic message of, 228
authenticity of, challenged, 76
authorship of, 51–52, 76, 117–18, 277, 279
on birthplace of Jesus, 351
cited by Paul, 205
on crucifixion, 418
on deception, 135
eschatological theme of, 231–32
and Gospel of Thomas, 231 n. 77, 231–32, 341
on the kingdom of God, 231–32
and Marcion, 492, 492 n. 23
and Paul, 51, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70
and substitutionary atonement, 253
and Tertullian, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70
and two-source hypothesis, 55
uther, 285, 292
ycurgus (Pseudo-Plutarch), 66
ing. *See* lies and deception
yons and Vienne, Letter of, 495
ysias, 80, 138, 139
Magnesians (Ignatius)
on church hierarchy, 479
and Ignatian corpus, 462
interpolations in, 469–70
on Judaism, 470, 480
theological perspectives in, 472, 476, 477
Manetho, 71

Manichees and anti-Manichean campaign, 455–58, 457 n. 12, 458 n. 17
Marcellus of Ancyra, 466, 467, 476–78
Marcion and Marcionism
  and Epistle of Barnabas, 52
  and Epistle of James, 296
  and Gospel of Luke, 492, 492 n. 23
  and Letter to the Laodiceans, 440, 440 n. 97, 442–45
  and Pastoral epistles, 193
  and Protevangelium Jacobi, 491–92
  and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 467, 471–72, 474
  Tertullian on, 63, 91, 492, 492 n. 23
Marcosians, 58
Marcus, 23
Mariam, 412
Mark
  and 1 Peter, 248, 251, 251 n. 41, 254, 256
  and two-source hypothesis, 55
  writings attributed to, 51–52, 117–18
Mark, gospel of
  and Apocalypse of Peter, 447
  apocalyptic message of, 228, 234, 236
  authenticity of, challenged, 76
  authorship of, 49, 51–52, 117–18
  and Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 408
  and 3 Corinthians, 430
  on crucifixion, 357, 418
  eschatological theme of, 163, 165
  and Gospel of Thomas, 232
  on Jude, brother of James, 297
  and Justin on Peter's "Memoirs," 118, 325–26, 326 nn. 6–7, 327 n. 8
  and Peter, 51, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70, 327 n. 8
  and Tertullian, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70
  and 1 Timothy, 373 n. 8
Martha, 397, 398

Martial, 53, 81, 84, 103, 166–67
martyrologies
  Acts of Ignatius (Antiochene Version), 506–8
  Martyrdom of Ignatius, 274
  Martyrdom of Isaiah, 332–33, 337, 399
  Martyrdom of Marian and James, 35, 274, 505–6
  Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius, 506
  Martyrdom of Pionius, 504–5
  Martyrdom of Polycarp, 493–508
    anachronisms and historical problems in, 495–97
    as apologia, 153, 483, 493–502
    authenticity of, 497–502
    dating of, 493, 499, 500
    and Martyrdom of Pionius, 504
    narrative voice in, 273–74
    parallels with Jesus' death, 494, 496, 499–500
    polemical targets of, 494, 500, 501–2
    redactional analysis of, 495–97
Mary, gospel of, 437
Mary, Mother of Jesus
  Apocalypse of Paul on, 454
  3 Corinthians on, 428, 428 n. 57, 431
  Melchizedekians on, 434
  and Protevangelium Jacobi, 485–87, 489–491
  virginity of, 485–86, 487, 490
Mary Magdalene, 20, 397, 398
Mary of Cassobola (Pseudo-Ignatius), 460, 461, 462, 468 n. 57, 472
material and literary prophylaxes, 127–28, 131
Matthew
  and Apostolic Constitutions, 392
  and Pistis Sophia, 412
  and two-source hypothesis, 55
  writings in name of, 141, 412
Matthew, gospel of

on acts of piety, 338
apocalyptic message of, 236
authenticity of, challenged, 75
authorship of, 149
and criteria for authentication, 141
on crucifixion, 418
and eyewitness testimony, 275
and Gospel of Thomas, 341
on Herod, 488
and Jesus' brothers, 486
and two-source hypothesis, 55
Matthias (author of Thomas the Contender), 412
Matthias (disciple replacing Judas Iscariot), 15, 392, 412, 415
Maximin, 352, 354
Maximus, 352
medical schools, 116–17
medicinal lies, 539–540, 542, 543, 545
Melchizedek tractate, 152, 432–34
Melito, 332
Memoirs (Hegesippus), 288
Memoirs of Peter, 118, 324–26, 326 nn. 6–7, 327 n. 8
Memorabilia (Favorinus), 139
Memorabilia (Xenophon), 135
Menedemus of Eretria, 53
Michal, 547–48
Milton, John, 460
Mishna, 350
The Mistaken Critic (Lucian), 98
Mithridates, 93 n. 2, 122, 122 n. 95, 133
Mixing-Bowl (Zopyrus of Heraclea), 86
morality of forgery, 546–48
Mordechai, Letter of, 101
Moses, 51, 73, 305–6, 319–20, 321, 482
Moses, Testament of, 74 n. 18

motivations of forgers, 97–105
apologia, 100–102, 102 n. 36
authority of authors, 119–21, 150–51, 153
in condemning forgeries, 18
and deceptive intentions of forgers, 131–32, 150–51
defamation of character, 102–4
humility of students, 105
Olympiodorus on, 112
political and religious authorization, 98–99
profitability, 97–98
Salvian's defense, 93–96
supplementation of a tradition, 104–5
validation of views, 119–21
Muratorian Fragment
on Apocalypse of Peter, 446, 447
on authority of canonical Gospels, 120
and criteria for authentication, 91
and Epistle of James, 285
on heretical works, 76
on Johannine writings, 423
on Letter to the Laodiceans, 75, 440, 440 n. 97, 441, 442, 443–44
on Luke, 277
on Pauline letters, 150
on Shepherd of Hermas, 49, 120 n. 92
on Wisdom of Solomon, 71 n. 6
Musaeus, 61, 86
Myra, 381
Mysteries (Abamon), 30, 46

Nag Hammadi library
on the flesh, 23, 409, 418–19
and Gnosticism, 23, 334
narrative voice in, 272
and scope of book, 6

on suffering of Christ, 409
texts of
1 Apocalypse of James, 284, 409, 531
2 Apocalypse of James, 284, 409
Apocryphon of James, 284, 306
Book of Thomas the Contender, 152, 412–15, 413 n. 9, 418, 431, 439
Gospel of Philip, 2, 19–20, 149, 236, 417, 531
Letter of Peter to Philip, 223, 409, 411, 438, 450
Melchizedek tractate, 152, 432–34
Paraphrase of Shem, 152, 404–6
Second Treatise of the Great Seth, 20, 365, 406, 411
See also Apocalypse of Peter, Coptic
Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea, 365
narrative voice, 266, 270 n. 79, 270–76
Nathaniel, 397
Natural History (Pliny the Elder), 54
Nautical Astronomy (Thales), 81
Neophron of Sicyon, 70
Nero, 127, 241, 360
Nestorius, 46
New Testament
and Apostolic Constitutions, 16–17
number of forged writings in, 529
orthonymous writings in, 1
presumed authenticity of writings, 17
See also specific books
Nicene orthodoxy, 395, 467, 475, 476 n. 65, 478, 479
Nicephorus, 447
Nicodemus, 354–55, 357
Nicodemus, gospel of, 60, 105, 149, 152, 354
Nikos (Nuqus), 110
Noah and the flood, 72, 73, 86, 140
noble lies, 135, 136, 540–41. *See also* lies and deception
non-pseudepigraphic forgeries, 35

Noriah, 19
Numa Pompilius, 124–25

Ogdoad (Irenaeus), 66–67
Okkelos, 109
Old Testament, 52. *See also specific books*
Olympiodorus, 32, 48, 98, 112–13
On Fate" (Minucius Felix), 75
On Grammarians" (Suetonius), 108
On Poetry Attributed to Orpheus (Epigenes), 86
On the Gospel," 90
On the Nature of Man (Hippocrates), 138
On the Proverbs of Solomon," 90
On the Two Forms of Martyrdom (Cyprian), 25
Onesimus, 174
Onesiphorus, 380, 381
Onias III, 100–101, 101 n. 30
Onomacritus, 61–62, 84, 86
oracles
  acrostics in, 127–28
  as apologia, 100, 153, 483, 513–18, 518–19
  and motivations of forgers, 98–99
  Onomacritus' falsifying of, 61–62, 84, 86
  role of, 61 n. 76
  Sibylline Oracles, 508–19
    as apologia, 100, 513–18
    as Christian creations, 128, 512–13
    Christian interpolations of, 510–12
    as counter-forgeries, 518–19
    numbering of, 508
    Sibyls, 2, 508, 509–10, 513–19
oral traditions and cultures, 383
Oratio ad Graecos (Justin), 51, 149
Origen

on Apocalypse of Paul, 452, 452 n. 133
on authority of canonical Gospels, 120, 120 n. 92
Commentary on John, 71 n. 6, 544
Commentary on Matthew, 486
Contra Celsum, 338, 516–17, 542–43
criteria for authorial attribution, 88
De principiis, 65
and De recta in deum fide, 49
on deception, 542–44
and detection of forgeries, 139
on disputed authorship, 75
and Epistle of James, 296
on eschatological renewal of creation, 233
falsifications of writings by, 64, 65, 76–77
on Hebrews, 88, 88 n. 66, 118
on interpolated oracles, 100
Isaiah cited by, 338
on Johannine writings, 424
on John's writings, 88 n. 66
and Pastoral epistles, 193
on 2 Peter, 223
on Petrine epistles, 88 n. 66
on Protevangelium Jacobi, 486
on Shepherd of Hermas, 48
on Sibyls and oracles, 516–17
on Wisdom of Solomon, 71 n. 6
writings in name of, 50, 121, 463–64
)rpheus, 79, 86
)rphic poems, 79
rthonymous writing, 1, 7, 71, 156
)vid, 44

writer, 192, 222
agan literature, forgery in, 69–70, 123–25, 128

alestine, 243–47, 286–87
anaetius, 47
anarion (Epiphanius), 19–24
anthera, 489, 491
apias, 229, 232, 325, 453
araphrase of Shem, 152, 404–6
arthenopaeus (Pseudo-Sophocles), 13, 103, 128
aschal Homily of Melito, 332
asiphon, 70
assion of Perpetua, 502–4, 503 n. 58, 506
'he Passion of Peter and Paul, 359
'he Passion of Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas (Harris and Gifford), 506
Passion of Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus," 352
astoral epistles, 192–217
and Acts of Paul, 379–84, 382 n. 21
arguments for authenticity of, 211–13
authorship of, 201–2, 202–5, 206, 368
on church organization and leadership, 152, 203–5, 208, 367–84, 400
common authorship of, 195–202, 205, 368
as corpus, 193–95, 194 n. 12, 201 n. 22, 368, 368 n. 3
as counterforgeries, 384
and Gnosticism, 192, 368 n. 3, 370, 371–72
historical context of, 369–70
and intertextual interpretations, 375–76
Pauline/non-Pauline views in, 206–11
polemical attacks in, 213–17
and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 468 n. 57, 479
scholarly perspectives on, 192–93
verisimilitudes in, 206, 209, 210, 212, 212 n. 35
on women, 374–77
writing style of, 202–3, 212
See also Titus; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy
atavinus, 99
aul

absolution of, 482
and anonymous texts, 49
and antinomianism, 302–3, 304, 305
and Antioch, 257, 261 n. 61, 261–62, 264, 308 (*see also* Peter–Paul relationship)
apocalyptic message of, 155
and apologetic forgeries, 101
and the apostles, 257, 263, 267, 281
and Apostolic Constitutions, 15, 392
authority of, 152, 173, 260, 262, 280–81
and author's relationship to authority, 87–88
and Barnabas, 317
on circumcision, 343
and Clement of Rome, 311, 318
and coauthorship theory, 212–13, 213 n. 39
communities of, 173, 203–5
conflicting views attributed to, 87–88
conversion of, 257, 263, 267, 280, 309
death of, 181 n. 53
deceptions of, 542
disputes regarding works of, 74, 76
and Epistle of James, 261, 290–91, 291 n. 16, 294–95, 295 n. 23, 296–97
and Epistula Clementis, 309–12
and Epistula Petri, 306–8
eschatological message of, 262–63
fabrications about, 59–60
on faith vs. works, 261, 294–95, 307
on the flesh, 425–32
forgeries in opposition to (*see* Epistula Clementis; Epistula Petri; James, epistle of; Jude, epistle of; Pseudo-Clementine literature)
forgeries in support of (*see* Acts of the Apostles; 1 Peter; 2 Peter)
gentile mission of, 173–74, 187–88, 306–7, 315, 315 n. 71
and Gentiles, 187–88
and Gospel of Luke, 51, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70

on grace vs. works, 186–87, 295, 302–3
and Homilies, 312, 315, 316–20
and James, 281, 288, 290, 296–97, 307, 315, 317
and Jerusalem conference, 267
and Jesus, 309
and Jewish Law, 187, 206–7, 257, 261, 263, 267, 281, 288, 293, 295, 307
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 441
and lion incident, 381
and literary fictions, 45, 45 n. 35
and Luke, 76, 117–18, 265, 267, 276–79
on marriage and sexual relations, 208, 372, 381, 383–84
ministry and missionary work of, 202, 250–51, 253 n. 48, 263, 267, 309
motivations of, 4–5
opponents of, 179–82, 206–7, 209, 213–17, 226, 260–61, 280–81, 427, 428–30, 429 n. 66
oral transmission of teachings by, 173
and Pauline School theory, 172 n. 37, 172–74
and Peter (*see* Peter–Paul relationship)
and 1 Peter, 240, 240 n. 3
2 Peter's references to, 227, 229
on purity laws, 208, 211
and Recognitions, 290, 314–15, 317–18
on "Satan," 185, 185 n. 67
and secretary hypothesis, 161, 218–22
and Seneca, 1–2, 101, 149, 153, 520–27
on Shepherd of Hermas, 48
as subject of debate, 152
and substitutionary atonement of Jesus, 253
on suffering, 255 n. 54, 259 n. 59
and Tertullian, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70
and unity in church leadership, 257–58
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 40, 41
on women in the church, 207–8, 374–75, 376 n. 14, 383–84
writing style of, 160–62

writings in name of, 117–18, 149, 150 (*see also* Alexandrians; Apocalypse of Paul; Deutero-Pauline letters; Ephesians; Galatians; Hebrews; Laodiceans; Pastoral epistles; Romans; 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians; 2 Thessalonians; 3 Corinthians)
aul and Seneca, Letters of, 520 n. 91, 520–27, 525 n. 108
'*aulus im ältesten Christentum* (Lindemann), 287 n. 7, 295 n. 23
Paulus und die Weisheit" (Conzelmann), 172
ausanias, 61, 80, 102
elagius, 75, 140
en names, 45–47
ergamum Library, 80, 84, 97, 118
ericope Adulterae, 365
eriktyone, 109
erpetua, 502–4, 503 n. 58
ersaeius, 70
ersecution of Christians
and Acts of Pilate, 352–53, 354, 357
and Acts of the Apostles, 241, 257–58, 482
in apostolic times, 241
by Jews, 482
and 1 Peter, 241, 256–59, 483
by Romans, 357
and Sibylline counterforgeries, 518
eter (apostle)
and Acts of the Apostles, 263–64, 307, 315 n. 71
allegiances to, 42
and anti-Jewish texts, 360
and Antioch, 307, 308 (*see also* Peter–Paul relationship)
and Apostolic Church Order, 397
and Apostolic Constitutions, 15, 392
authority of, 310, 311
and bishop succession, 309–12
and Clement of Rome, 309, 310, 310 n. 61, 311, 318
and debates of the flesh, 408–12

and Epistula Clementis, 309–12
fabrications about, 59
and faith vs. works ideology, 307
and fig tree parable, 446
gentile mission of, 257, 263, 306, 307, 309–10, 315, 315 n. 71
and Gnostic community, 402–4
and Gospel of Mark, 51, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70, 327 n. 8
and Homilies, 316–17, 320
illiteracy of, 242–47, 245 n. 23
and Jerusalem conference, 257, 263–64
and Jesus, 251, 309, 401, 411
and Jewish Law, 225, 257, 261, 306, 308, 332
and Judaism, 332
and leadership of the church, 401–4, 404 n. 99, 411
martyrdom of, 241, 450 n. 126, 451, 484
missionary work of, 247, 250
name change of, 325, 327 n. 8
Origen on epistles of, 88 n. 66
and Paul (*see* Peter–Paul relationship)
and Recognitions, 320
Sibylline counterforgeries on, 352–53
and Simon Magus, 313–14
and Tertullian, 76, 117–18, 188 n. 70
tour of realms of the dead, 447–48
writings in name of, 117–18, 143–44, 149 (*see also* Apocalypse of Peter; Apocalypse of Peter, Coptic; Epistula Petri; Peter to Philip, Letter of; 1 Peter; 2 Peter)
eter, gospel of
and Akhmim fragment, 326, 327, 327 n. 8
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 152, 328–32
and Apocalypse of Peter, 445
and apostolic authority, 17
authenticity of, challenged, 75, 76
authorship of, 2, 223, 328

and criteria for authentication, 89, 142, 143
on crucifixion, 357
dating of, 328
fabrications present in, 60
and Gospel of John, 330
and Justin on Peter's "Memoirs," 118, 324–26, 326 nn. 6–7
narrative voice in, 271
scholarly perspectives on, 4
Serapion's condemnation of, 75, 76, 90–91, 142, 150, 324, 327, 450
techniques of forgers in, 123
eter to Philip, letter of, 223, 409, 411, 450
Peter, 239–263
as apologia, 252 n. 44, 483–84
on authority of Paul, 152, 260
authorship of, 33, 223, 224, 240–42, 242 n. 9, 247, 248 n. 31
and Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 408
and criteria for authentication, 89, 143
on crucifixion, 401
and Epistle of James, 297, 297 n. 28
evidence of forgery in, 240–47
function of forgery, 249–255
and Ignatius/Pseudo-Ignatius, 470
and illiteracy of Peter, 242–47
and Mark, 248, 251, 251 n. 41, 254, 256
Pauline character of, 250–55, 251 n. 41, 252 n. 44, 256
on persecution, 241, 256–59, 483
and Peter–Paul relationship, 255–59, 308
reasons for, 255–59
scholarly perspectives on, 239–40
and secretary hypothesis, 218, 219, 222, 223 n. 63, 248–49
on suffering, 254, 255 n. 54, 256–59, 259 n. 59, 483, 484
and unity in church leadership, 257–59
writing style of, 139
Peter, 222–29, 259–63

authenticity of, challenged, 74
on authority of Paul, 152, 260, 261–63
authorship of, 33, 222–25, 250
and Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 403 n. 94, 403–4, 408
and criteria for authentication, 89, 143
and Epistula Petri, 308
eschatological theme of, 152, 225–29, 231, 262
evidence for forgery of, 222–25
on false teachers/teachings, 226–29, 230 n. 76, 308, 430
and intention to deceive, 129–30
and Jude, 55, 224, 227
narrative voice in, 271
and Peter–Paul relationship, 260, 261–62, 308
plagiarism case for, 55
polemical function of, 225–29
scholarly perspectives on, 4
and secretary hypothesis, 218, 219, 222, 223 n. 63
techniques of forgers in, 33, 123
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 41
writing style of, 139, 223–24
eter–Paul relationship
Antioch incident
conflict in, 257, 261 n. 61, 264
Galatians on, 257, 307, 308, 316, 543
and Homilies, 316
and Jewish identity, 287
and Jewish Law, 261–62, 307, 308
and Johnson's case, 290
contrasts highlighted, 309
depicted as
in conflict, 257, 261 n. 61, 263–64, 316–17, 543
as enemies, 281, 290, 306–8, 309–10
in unified harmony, 255–59, 260, 261–62, 263–64, 310–11
Irenaeus on, 310 n. 62, 310–11

Jerome on, 543
texts on
Acts on, 251 n. 41, 257, 262, 263–64, 267, 281, 297, 307, 308
1 Clement on, 311
Epistula Clementis on, 309–12
Epistula Petri on, 290, 306–8
Galatians on, 257, 261 n. 61, 307, 308, 543
Homilies on, 315, 316–17
1 Peter on, 255–59, 308
2 Peter on, 260, 261–62, 308
haedo, 70
halaris, letters of, 44
hibionites, 19–24, 58, 75
hiladelphians (Ignatius), 462, 471–74, 477, 479
hilemon
Colossians compared to, 174, 178 n. 46
on forgiveness of sins, 177 n. 43
and intertextual interpretations, 376
writing style of, 162, 175–76
hiletus, 191
hilip, 392, 412
hilip, gospel of
authorship of, 2
Epiphanius' condemnation of, 19–20
eschatological theme of, 236
on material world, 417
as pseudonymous work, 531
hilippians (Pauline)
on church hierarchy, 205
on Clement, 311
eschatological theme of, 165, 185
on forgiveness of sins, 177 n. 43
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 439, 442, 443, 445
and Letters of Paul and Seneca, 521

writing style of, 162, 175–76, 185
Philippians (Pseudo-Ignatius)
ambiguities in, 478
and Ignatian corpus, 462
Job Commentary's parallels with, 465
on Judaism, 480
theological perspectives in, 476, 477
Ussher's exposure of, 461
hilo, 321
hiloaus, 109
hilomelium church, 493
hilosophers (Phlegon), 81
hilosophical schools, forgery in, 105–21
ancient perspectives on, 107–11, 117–19, 173
Iamblichus on, 107, 110–11, 111 n. 64
of lecture notes, 114–15, 115 n. 74
medical schools, 116–17
motivations for, 112, 114, 119–121
Porphyry on, 107, 108–10
scholarly perspectives on, 105–7, 106 n. 53, 107 n. 54
hilostratus, 138–39
hlegon, 81
hocus of Samos, 81
hygelus, 383
hylarchus, 56–57
hyntis, 109
ilate
and Abgar Correspondence, 365–66
Anaphora Pilati on, 358–59
and anti-Jewish texts, 328–30, 331, 354–62, 365
in apologia, 484–85
fabrications about, 60, 351
and Gospel of Peter, 328–330, 331
writings in name of (*see* Pilate Cycle)

ilate Cycle, 358–62
Anaphora Pilati, 358–59, 360, 361
fabrications present in, 59, 60
Letter of Herod to Pilate, 361–62
Letter of Pilate to Claudius, 359–61
Letter of Pilate to Herod, 362
Mors Pilati, 362 n. 90
Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea, 362 n. 90
Paradosis Pilati, 359 n. 83
on status of Jews, 152
Vindicta Salvatoris, 362 n. 90
See also Acts of Pilate (Christian version)
ionius, 494, 504–5
isistratus, tyrant of Athens, 61, 62, 98, 112
isistratus of Ephesus, 70
istis Sophia, 412, 437
ius, bishop of Rome, 49, 120 n. 92
lagiarism, 52–55
in Apostolic Constitutions, 14, 55, 384, 384 n. 25
attitudes toward, 85
in 2 Peter, 55
and scope of book, 6
standards for, 115
lato
and Allegory of the Cave, 414
and detection of forgeries, 138
Diogenes on works of, 70
on lying, 135, 540–41, 542
prophylaxes of, 127
on Sibyl, 514
on Socrates' paean, 104
and techniques of forgers, 127, 128
writings in name of, 122, 127, 212 n. 34
lautus, 80, 138

liny the Elder, 54, 124–25, 137, 139, 241
lutarch, 46, 61, 80, 84
olemics and polemical contexts, 3, 4, 531
olitical motivations of forgers, 98–99
olybius
  on eyewitness testimony, 270, 270 n. 81, 274
  on fabrications, 56–58
  on market for forgeries, 98
  on plagiarism, 54
  Polycarp (Ignatian), 461, 462, 476, 507
  Polycarp (martyr), 193, 493, 496–99. *See also* Martyrdom of Polycarp
olycrates, 70, 139
ompey, 219
orphyry, 85, 87 n. 65, 107, 108–10, 119, 519
oseidippus, 81
ostel, G., 485
'he Praise of Folly (Erasmus), 25
reaching of Peter, 75, 89, 143
reparatio Evangelica (Eusebius) 71, 538
rodicus, 61, 84, 86
rofit as motive of forgers, 97–98
rolegomenon (Olympiodorus), 112
rophecies, *ex eventu*, 72–73
rophecies of Barcabbas, 75
rophylaxes, 127–28, 131, 171
rotevangelium Jacobi
  as apologia, 60, 153, 488–91
  authorship of, 485, 487–88, 488 n. 17
  Celsus refutation in, 489–91
  condemnation of, by Pope, 486
  fabrications present in, 60, 489–91
  and Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, 55
  motivations of author, 5, 491
  multifunctionality of, 151

narrative voice in, 273, 274
polemical targets of, 491–93
titles of, 485 n. 7
roto-orthodox leadership
and debates of the flesh, 407–8, 411–12
and Letter to the Laodiceans, 444–45
and Peter, 411
and revelatory texts, 398–406
roverbs, 247
salms, 177, 470
salms of Heracleides, 433
seudepigrapha, definition of, 16, 29–30
seudo-Athanasius, 477
seudo-Clementine literature, 312–21
Arian perspective of, 458–60
on authority of Paul, 152
authorship of, 312
on crucifixion, 546 n. 41
Grundschrift, 312, 313, 318
on Judaism, 332
on Peter–Paul relationship, 311
polemics of, 313–14, 320–21, 459–60
and Sibyllina, 510
warnings against forgeries in, 127
See also Homilies; Recognitions
seudo-Ignatian letters, 460–80
ambiguities in, 478–79
anachronisms and historical problems in, 461, 463
Arian sentiments in, 394, 466, 467, 468, 474–75, 479
author of, 394, 462–66 (*see also* Julian of Antioch)
dating of, 460, 466
influence of, 460
interpolated versions of, 460–61, 462–63, 469–70
Long Recension, 460, 461, 462

Middle Recension, 5–6, 462
polemical targets of, 474–78, 479–80
purpose of, 466–68
scholarly perspectives on, 4, 461–62
techniques of forgers in, 469–70
theological investments of, 462, 464, 470–74
works, 462
See also Antiochians; Ephesians; Hero; Mary of Cassobola; Philippians; Romans; Tarsians
seudo-Justin, 149, 514, 515
seudo-Matthew, gospel of, 55, 105, 273, 486
seudonymity, 45–47
definition of, 29–30
and intellectual property, 78–81
as literary form, 78–81, 128–29
and motivations of forgers, 97
seudo-Plutarch, 66
silanthropism, 467, 471–72, 474
tolemy Philadelphius, 98, 112
unishment of forgers, 83–85, 132
ythagoras and Pythagorean school
and Empedocles, 54, 115, 118
Iamblichus on, 109–14, 111 n. 64
and lecture-notes publications, 115, 115 n. 74, 119
and literary output of school, 107, 107 n. 54, 108, 109–14, 111 n. 64
and market for forgeries, 98
poetry of, 79, 86
and techniques of forgers, 124–25

) writer, 55
)oheleth, 71
)uintilian, 47, 80, 114–15, 135
)uintus, 495–96, 497, 500
)uintus Petilius, 124

.ahab, 547
eactualization of the tradition, 39–42
.ebouel, 406
.ecognitions (Pseudo-Clement)
  Arian perspective of, 458–60
  authorship of, 1, 150, 312
  counterforgery of, 318–20, 319 n. 82
  dating of, 312 n. 63
  and Paul, 290, 314–15, 317–18
  polemic of, 314–15
  on Scriptural prophets, 343 n. 50
A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity" (Duff), 76
edactional forgeries, 34–35
eligious motivations of forgers, 98–99
.epublic (Plato), 135
.evelation
  and Ascension of Isaiah, 336–37
  authenticity of, challenged, 75, 76
  and criteria for authentication, 142
  curse in conclusion of, 66
  Dionysius on, 88–89
  eschatological theme of, 167, 229
  and homonymity issue, 48
  prophecies of, 74 n. 16
  writing style of, 139
evelatory texts, 398–406
.omans (Ignatius), 461, 462, 470, 471, 473
.omans (Pauline)
  Acts of the Apostles compared to, 267
  Colossians compared to, 176
  and Epistle of James, 291–93, 293 n. 19
  eschatological theme of, 165, 185, 216
  on foods, 208
  on forgiveness of sins, 177, 177 n. 43

on Hermas, 48
on Jewish Law, 206
and Letter to the Galatians, 160
oath in, 207
on salvation, 187 n. 69
and secretary hypothesis, 218
and 1 Timothy, 373 n. 8
on women in the church, 376 n. 14, 383–84
writing style of, 162, 185
.ome, 241–42
.ufinus
and criteria for authentication, 142
and De recta in deum fide, 49
on disputed authorship, 75
and falsifications, 64–65
on falsifications of writings, 63–64, 120
and forged letters, 83
on Recognitions, 459
on Tertullian, 128
.ufus, 221

abbath, 340–41
abellianism, 467, 471–72, 473, 474, 476–78
achkritik, theological, 141–42
alonius of Geneva, 84, 94–96
alvian of Marseille, 84, 94–96, 119–20, 133, 548
amaritan Chronicle II, 24 n. 32
amuel, 50
Samuel, 135, 545, 548
arpedon, 139
ea-voyage narration conventions, 269–70, 276
econd Treatise of the Great Seth, 20, 365, 406, 411
ecretary hypothesis, 218–22
for 1 Peter, 248–49

scholarly perspectives on, 218 n. 50
and writing style differences, 161, 185
eneca
and apologetic forgeries, 101
and authority of authors, 85–86
on Epicurean writings, 107–8
and literary fictions, 45, 45 n. 35
and Paul, 1–2, 101, 149, 153, 520–27
and secretary hypothesis, 220
eneca the Elder, 85
eparationism, 409
eptuagint, 247
erapion's condemnation of Gospel of Peter
and Akhmim fragment, 327
and criteria for authorial authenticity, 90
and docetism charges, 90, 142, 324, 327, 450
and early orthodox criticism, 150
Eusebius on, 90–91, 324
and pseudepigraphy charges, 75, 76
ermons, 75
eth, books of, 150
everus Chronicle (Sulpicius Severus), 71
extus Emiricus, 135
exual rituals and deviancies, 20–21, 22 n. 29
hem, 404–6
hepherd of Hermas
authority of, 120 n. 92
Eusebius on, 32 n. 8, 48, 75
and homonymity issue, 48
orthonymous status of, 32 n. 8, 74 n. 16
Sibyl reference in, 514
on truthfulness, 541–42
ibylline Oracles, 508–19
as apologetic forgeries, 513–18

as Christian creations, 128, 512–13
Christian interpolations of, 510–12
as counter-forgeries, 518–19
numbering of, 508
Sibyls, 2, 508, 509–10, 513–19
idon, 71
ilas, 266, 268
ilvanus, 248–49, 251, 251 n. 41, 254, 256
imon (false teacher), 18, 126, 349, 427–28, 436
imon Magus, 313–14, 315, 315 n. 72, 316, 360, 392
imon of Cyrene, 546 n. 41
imon Peter. *See* Peter (apostle)
imonides, 81
implicius, 79
myrneans (Ignatius), 420–21, 462, 473, 474, 477, 479
ocrates, 53, 70, 70 n. 2, 104, 135, 539–40
ocratic epistles, 44
olomon, 35, 40, 71, 71 n. 6, 123, 264
olon, 62
ophia of Jesus Christ, 437
ophocles, 66, 103, 541
osicrates of Rhodes, 47, 70
ozomen, 447, 452 n. 133, 452–53
partans, 100–101
partianus, Pseudo-, 26
peculum, 440, 441
peeches, 55–58
tephen, 251
trabo, 62
trato, 81
tromateis (Clement), 74, 76, 193, 277, 418, 486, 542, 543
tudents of philosophy, 105, 114–15, 173. *See also* philosophical schools, forgery in
tyle, literary, 138–39

uetonius, 48, 99, 102, 108, 127
uffering
  Acts of the Apostles on, 257–58, 263
  Erasmus's views on, 25
  of Jesus, 177, 255 n. 54, 257, 408–11, 409 n. 3, 421
  Paul's views on, 255 n. 54, 259 n. 59
  persecution of Christians, 241
  1 Peter on, 254, 255 n. 54, 256–59, 259 n. 59, 483, 484
uron King of Tyre, 71
ybilline Oracles. *See* oracles

acitus, 241
arsians (Pseudo-Ignatius), 461, 462, 469, 470–71, 474, 479
atian, 193
echniques of forgers, 121–28
  and deceptive intentions of forgers, 131–32
  first-person narratives, 123
  imitation of style, 121–22
  interpolations, 128
  material and literary prophylaxes, 127–28, 131
  verisimilitudes, 122–23
  warnings against forgeries, 126–27
el Hum, 245
emple, destruction of, 242
ertullian
  and Acts of Paul, 132–33, 379, 380, 382, 383
  on Acts of the Apostles, 277
  Adversus omnes haereses, 51, 149
  anti-Jewish writings of, 332
  on authority of canonical Gospels, 91, 117–18, 143, 188 n. 70
  on authorship of gospels, 51–52
  on book of Enoch, 72, 86, 140
  on fabrications, 59–60, 60 n. 75, 76, 84
  on Johannine writings, 423

on Letter to the Laodiceans, 440
on Marcion, 63, 91, 492, 492 n. 23
on martyrs, 508
on Passion of Perpetua, 503 n. 58
and Pastoral epistles, 193
on Pilate, 351
and Pilate cycle works, 358
and Pseudo-Ignatian letters, 461
and Seneca, 527
writing of, interpolated into Cyprian's work, 120, 128
estaments, 229 n. 76
haddeus, 363
hales, 81
The Heroes' Sons" (Homer), 50
hecla, 59, 379, 379 n. 17, 380, 382
hemistogenes, 30
heodoret, 50, 461, 544
heodosius Augustus, 125
heodotus, 461
heogony (Hesiod), 37, 80
heophilus
and Acts dedication, 265, 277, 482
and criteria for authentication, 90, 139
on eyewitness testimony, 275
on Sibyls and oracles, 516
heopompus, 102
hespis, 12
Thessalonians
Acts of the Apostles compared to, 267
as earliest orthonymous writing, 156
eschatological theme of, 151, 155, 156, 163, 165, 166, 169, 170, 259 n. 59
and Gospel of Thomas, 232
motivations of Paul, 4–5

referenced in 2 Thessalonians, 168–70
2 Thessalonians compared to, 156–57, 158 n. 10, 158–60
and Timothy, 210
writing style of, 162, 175–76, 185
Thessalonians, 156–71
authorship of, 33
as counterforgery, 151, 167–71, 170 n. 30
as earliest forged writing, 156
eschatological theme of, 152, 162–67, 169, 170, 262
evidence of forgery in, 157–58
prophylaxes of, 127
on "Satan," 185 n. 67
scholarly perspectives on, 4, 76, 82, 156–57, 158
techniques of forgers in, 33, 127, 170–71, 171 n. 31
theology of, 162–67
1 Thessalonians compared to, 156–57, 158 n. 10, 158–60
warnings against forgeries in, 24–25, 127, 150
writing style of, 160–62, 175
Thessalus, 116
Thomas (apostle; tax collector), 392
Thomas (brother of Jesus), 230, 412–15, 457, 458 n. 17
Thomas, gospel of, 230–37
anti-apocalyptic message of, 230–37
anti-Jewish sentiments of, 338–44, 344 n. 51
authorship of, 2, 149
embedded forgery in, 34
eschatological theme of, 152, 228, 230–37
on false teachers, 236–37
on the flesh, 152, 415–18
and Gospel of Luke, 231 n. 77, 231–32, 341
and Gospel of Peter, 412
on the Kingdom of God, 231 n. 77, 231–32, 235, 236
Thomas the Contender, Book of, 152, 412–15, 413 n. 9, 418, 431, 439
Thucydides, 56, 58, 70 n. 2, 122 n. 95, 138, 274

'iberius
and Abgar Correspondence, 102, 365–66
and Acts of Pilate, 352–53
and Anaphora Pilati, 358–59
fabrications about, 59, 60, 351
and Letter of Pilate to Claudius, 360, 361
and Sibylline Oracles, 509
'imaeus, 54, 57–58, 115, 270
'imothei ad Ecclesiam Libri IV (Salvian), 94–96, 119–20
'imothy
and Colossians' authorship, 172, 174
Paul's correspondence with, 84 (*see also* 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy)
writings in name of, 94–96, 119–20, 133
Timothy, 367–84
authenticity of, challenged, 76
authorship of, 33
on church offices and hierarchy, 204–5, 208, 369, 377 n. 15, 377–79, 400
as component of Pastoral corpus, 195, 196–205, 368 n. 3
and 1 Corinthians, 376
on false teachers, 207, 214, 369–74, 378
historical context of, 369–70
intention to deceive in, 32
and intertextual interpretations, 376
and Jewish Law, 206–7, 371–72, 373–74
oath in, 207
Pauline and non-Pauline views in, 206–9
polemics of, 369–377
rejection of, by early critics, 74, 193
scholarly perspectives on, 4, 192
on teachings of Jesus, 205
techniques of forgers in, 33
and 2 Timothy, 197–99
and Titus, 196–97, 369
and *Vergegenwäartigung* tradition, 40

on women, 207–8, 374–77, 381
writing style of, 203
Timothy
and Acts of Paul, 381
authenticity of, challenged, 76
chronological issues in, 209–10
and coauthorship theory, 213
as component of Pastoral corpus, 195, 197–205, 368, 368 n. 3
as counterforgery, 217
eschatological theme of, 152, 163, 191–92, 216–17, 231, 236
on false teachers, 213–17, 370, 372–73
historical context of, 369
on lion incident, 381
Pauline and non-Pauline views in, 209, 252
polemic of, 213–17
rejection of, by early critics, 74, 193
and 1 Timothy, 197–99
and Titus, 199
and *Vergegenwärtigung* tradition, 41
verisimilitudes in, 209, 212
on women, 381
writing style of, 202–3
ischendorf, 354
itus (associate of Paul), 94, 96, 380, 381
itus, book of
and Acts of the Apostles, 268
on church offices and hierarchy, 204–5, 210–11, 377–79
as component of Pastoral corpus, 195, 196–97, 199–205, 368 n. 3
on false teachers, 214, 369–74, 378
historical context of, 369–70
Pauline and non-Pauline views in, 210–11
polemics of, 369–77
and 1 Timothy, 196–97, 369
and 2 Timothy, 199

writing style of, 203
orah, authorship of, 51
aditional allegiances in Jewish culture, 39–42
aditions, supplementation of, 104–5
rajan, 241
rallians (Ignatius)
ambiguities in, 478
anachronisms and historical problems in, 461, 463
on authority of apostles, 120
on church hierarchy, 479
on the flesh, 420, 421
and Ignatian corpus, 462
theological perspectives in, 472
Trinitarian emphasis of, 471
transparent" pseudepigraphy, 129–32, 230 n. 76, 533. *See also* intention to deceive
eatises, 75
riagmi (Ion of Chius), 79
rojan War, account of, 123–24
rullan Council of 692, 19, 393
übingen School, 251–52, 252 n. 44
ychicus, 188, 190
/pes of forgeries, 34–35

sage of writings, 89

alentinians, 22–23, 58
alerius Antias, 124
alidation as motive of forgers, 119–21
aphres, 71
arro, Terentius, 127, 138, 144, 269, 509, 516
ergegenwärtigung, 39–42
erisimilitudes, 33, 44, 122–23, 131
ictor of Capua, 440
ictorinus, 75, 83

Vision of Isaiah, 333–34, 337
Vitruvius, 14, 53–54
Vivilius of Thapsus, 51 n. 54

War (Josephus), 71, 102
Wisdom of Solomon, 71, 71 n. 6
Women
  Acts of Paul on, 381, 383
  Apostolic Church Order on, 397 nn. 77–79, 397–98
  1 Corinthians on, 374–75, 376, 384
  Didascalia Apostolorum on, 388–90, 390 n. 43
  Galatians on, 383
  and Jesus, 397
  in leadership positions, 387, 389
  Romans on, 376 n. 14, 383–84
  1 Timothy on, 207–8, 374–77, 381
  2 Timothy on, 381

Xenophon, 30, 46, 70, 70 n. 2, 135, 539–40

Zacharaias, 485, 487
Zebedee, 246 n. 24
Zeno, 62, 84, 102, 118
Zopyrus of Heraclea, 86
Zostrianus, 85

INDEX OF MODERN SCHOLARS

This index includes only **Modern Scholars.**

For specific ancient sources organized by book, chapter and verse, refer to the **Ancient Sources** index found on pages 575–589.

For general concepts, including a topical guide to ancient sources, refer to the **Subject** index found on pages 591-622.

Aageson, James, 194
Achtemeier, P., 129, 247, 252
Aland, Kurt, 38-39
Amelungk, Arnold, 464, 476 nn. 65-66

Bagatti, Bellarmino, 246 n. 24
Bahr, Gordon, 220
Bailey, John A., 157, 160
Balz, H., 39, 104, 114
Bar-Ilan, Meir, 242, 243-44, 246, 287 n. 7
Barlow, Claude, 524
Barrett, C. K., 267 n. *66*, 278
Barth, Markus, 106, 176 n. 41, 185
Bauckham, R., 129-30, 223 n. 63, 224, 229 n. 76, 300 n. 35, 300 n. 40, 300, 302, 303, 333, 446, 447-48, 450
Bauer, W., 363, 456
Baum, Armin Daniel, 31, 31 n. 6, *69* n. 1, 78, 78 n. 32, 87 n. 65, 87-88, 90, 106, 107, 108-10, 116-17, 118, 130, 136, 202-3
Baur, F. C., 192, 251-52, 252 n. 44, 256, 372
Beatrice, P., 37
Becker, Eve-Marie, 29, 167 n. 24, 169
BeDuhn, Jason, 31 n. 3
Benko, Stephen, 22
Bentley, Richard, 12, 44

Bernays, J., 129
Best, Ernest, 184, 185 n. 67, 188, 188 n. 70
Bickell, J. W., 396
Bickerman, E. J., 37
Bigg, Charles, 458-59
Bisbee, Gary, 499, 502, 502 n. 51, 507
Bischoff, Bernhard, 524
Blanke, Helmut, 106, 176 n. 41
Bludau, A., 62 n. 82
Bock, D., 278
Boissier, G., 522
Boring, M. Eugene, 239-40, 253
Bovon, Francois, 398
Bradshaw, Paul, 345
Brock, Sebastian, 363
Brown, Milton, 463
Brown, Raymond, 403, 419, 419 n. 26, 422, 422 nn. 30-32, 423, 424
Brox, Norbert, *69* n. 1, 78, 95-96, 106, 122, 130, 136, 193, 194, 212, 212 n. 35, 248-49, 256, 256 n. 57, 468 n. 57, 479, 538
Buchholz, D., 446, 446 n. 116
Bujard, Walter, 175-76, 184
Bundy, D., 426
Burkitt, F. C., 363, 455-56
Burnet, Régis, 439, 441, 443-44
Buschmann, Gerd, 496
Byron, George Gordon, 426
Byrskog, Samuel, 266, 266 n. 64
Cadbury, H., 268
Calhoun, Robert Matthew, 122 n. 95
Campbell, William S., 265, 274, 275 n. 95
Campenhausen, Hans von, 495-96
Camps, J. Rius, 462
Candlish, J. S., 128-29
Capelle, Bernard, 393

Carey, Greg, 337-38
Cavallo, G., 445
Chancey, Mark, 244, 287 n. 7
Charles, J. Daryl, 298, 298 n. 30, 300
Charles, R. H., 333
Clarke, Emma C., 46
Cludius, H. H., 240, 248
Collins, John, 72-73, 510, 511, 513
Connolly, R. H., 344
Conzelmann, Hans, 172
Costa, C. D. N., 43-44
Côté, Dominique, 313
Cribiore, Raffaella, 121, 242-43
Crönert, W., 103
Crossan, J. D., 328, 328 n. 14, 330-31
Cureton, William, 462
Czachesz, Istvan, 448, 449, 453 n. 139

Daniélou, Jean, 397 n. 79
Davids, Peter H., 299 n. 33, 305
Davies, Stevan L., 60 n. 75, 379, 379 n. 17
de Santos Otero, Aurelio, 452 n. 133, 453 n. 138
de Strycker, Emile, 486
de Wette, W. M. L., 182-83, 184, 285
DeConick, April, 231 nn. 77-78, 233, 234, 338, 342, 344 n. 51, 417, 417 n. 20, 418
Dehandschutter, B., 496
Denker, Jürgen, 331
Dessau, Herman, 46
Dibelius, Martin, 166, 296
Diekamp, 464
Dillon, John M., 46
Doerfler, Maria, 101 n. 34
Doering, Lutz, 242 n. 9, 251 n. 43
Donelson, Lewis, 122, 131, 212 n. 34, 214

Draguet, R., 464
Drey, Johann Sebastian von, 392
Drijvers, H. J. W., 363, 455, 456, 457, 457 n. 12, 457 n. 14
Dubois, Jean-Daniel, 360 n. 85, 406
Duensing, H., 452 n. 133, 453 n. 138
Duff, Jeremy, 76, 78, 192
Dunn, James, 129

Easton, B. S., 130 n. 122
Edwards, Mark, 313
Eichhorn, J. G., 192, 193, 248
Elliott, J. H., 228 n. 75, 239, 246-47, 250 n. 40, 252, 360
Elliott, J. K., 224, 435 n. 80
Epp, E., 192-93
Ernst, Carl, 109, 110
Evanson, E., 182
Ewald, Heinrich, 172

Faivre, A., 398
Fascher, E., 251
Fee, Gordon, 201
Feldman, Louis, 244
Fenton, J. C., 97
Fideler, David R., 107 n. 54
Fischer, K. M., 75, 248, 254
Fitzmyer, J., 278
Fonrobert, C., 350, 350 n. 64
Foskett, Mary, 488
Fossum, Jarl, 234
Foster, Paul, 325, 326, 326 nn. 6-7
Frank, Nicole, 171 n. 33
Frenschkowski, M., 59
Frey, Jörg, 3 n. 5, 225, 230 n. 76, 298, 298 n. 30, 303, 304, 305 n. 53
Fuchs, Rüdiger, 194
Funk, F. X., 345 n. 56, 393, 464, 476 n. 65

unkenstein, Amos, 321
urnish, Victor Paul, 174
ürst, A., 520, 520 n. 91, 523

ager, John, 513
amble, Harry, 42, 105-6
ass, J. C., 192
effcken, Johannes, 511, 513
ero, Stephen, 22, 35
ese, Michael, 106
esenius, W., 333
ifford, S. K., 506
ill, Christopher, 134 n. 133, 533 n. 8, 541
lasson, T. F., 231
oguel, M., 166

oodspeed, Edgar J., 183
oppelt, L., 248, 252
ounell, Rémi, 353, 353 n. 71, 354, 360 n. 85
rafton, Anthony, 25-26, 78, 130, 131, 137
rébaut, Sylvain, 434-35, 445
reen, J., 129
reschat, Katharina, 327
riffiths, Paul, 134-35, 536, 537, 545
rotius, 166
ryson, Roger, 398 n. 79
udeman, A., 98
uerrier, Louis, 434-35
unkel, Hermann, 233 n. 82
unther, John, 179

läfner, G., 194, 194 n. 12, 368
lagedorn, Dieter, 394, 463, 464, 465
lall, Robert, 336, 336 n. 31, 399, 399 n. 85
lannah, Darrell, 335, 399

[annah, Jack, 462-63
[arnack, A., 166, 268, 325, 394, 396, 426, 440, 441, 442, 444, 464, 486, 523
[arnack, Adolf, 439
[arris, J. Rendell, 506
[arris, William, 242
[arrison, P. N., 129, 202, 203
[aufe, Günter, 214, 368, 368 n. 3
[avelaar, Henriette, 402-3, 403 n. 94, 410
[effernan, Thomas, 503
[egermann, B., 130 n. 122
[engel, Martin, 51, 293 n. 19
[ercher, R., 43
[ershbell, Jackson B., 46
[erzer, Jens, 3 n. 5, 192, 194, 200, 252
[ezser, Catherine, 243-44, 246, 287 n. 7
[ilgenfeld, A., 157, 325
[ilhorst, A., 379, 452, 525, 525 n. 109
[ills, Julian, 435 n. 81
[ock, Ronald, 486
[ogan, Karina Martin, 73
[olland, Glenn S., 167 n. 24
[oltzmann, H. J., 130 n. 122, 157, 184, 192
[ooker, Morna, 179-80
[opfner, T., 46
[ornschuh, Manfred, 435-36, 436 n. 82, 437 n. 87
[ovhanessian, Vahan, 429
[übner, R. M., 5-6, 462
[ughes, Frank, 170 n. 30
[üneburg, Martin, 183, 189
[unzinger, C., 241-42, 242 n. 8

ʒydorczyk, Z., 353, 353 n. 71, 354

ackson-McCabe, Matt, 286, 291 n. 16
akobi, Rainer, 525-26

ames, M. R., 445
anssen, Martina, 3 n. 5, 45, *69* n. 1, 108, 130 n. 122, 132 n. 129
ervell, J., 278
ewett, Robert, 157, 159, 160, 166, 171 n. 31
ohnson, Luke Timothy, 130, 194, 201, 202, 203, 204, 212-13, 213-14, 215, 286, 290, 291, 368 n. 3
ohnston, S., 427, 429
oly, Robert, 6, 462
ones, F. Stanley, 318, 319, 319 n. 82
ülicher, A., 251

arris, Robert, 214, 215
eim, Theodor, 495, 497
eith, Chris, 365
elley, Nicole, 313, 459-60
ern, F. H., 285
irk, A., 331
lauck, H.-J., 130 n. 122
lijn, A. F. J., 427, 429
night, Jonathan, 334, 335
nox, John, 183
onradt, Matthias, 287, 297
opecek, Thomas, 391, 395
oschorke, Klaus, 402
raus, Thomas J., 446 n. 116
rauter, Stefan, 526
rentz, Edgar, 157, 158, 166

ambert, David, 96
ampe, G. W. H., 354
echner, Thomas, 5-6, 462
egras, Bernard, 52-53
eipoldt, Johannes, 416
eppä, Outi, 174 n. 39, 184
eutholf, J., 396

iénard, Édmond, 520 n. 91
ieu, Judith, 422 n. 32, 423
ightfoot, J. B., 50, 441, 460, 462, 463, 475, 475 n. 63, 477, 507, 521, 523
incoln, Andrew, 78, 183, 184
indemann, Andreas, 168-69, 172, 186 n. 68, 217, 227, 254, 287 n. 7, 292, 295 n. 23
ipsius, R. A., 495, 497
öhr, Winrich, 502 n. 52
ouw, Johannes P., 245 n. 23
üdemann, Gerd, 318, 319
uttikhuizen, Gerald P., 410, 427, 429

lacDonald, Dennis, 380, 382, 383
lacDonald, Margaret, 106
laehler, H., 445
lalherbe, Abraham, 157, 158
larcus, Joel, 261 n. 61
larshall, I. Howard, 212 n. 32, 214
lartin, Dale, 116 n. 75, 261 n. 61
lartyn, J. Louis, 399 n. 85, 403
larxsen, Willi, 157, 169
lasson, F., 426
layer, Hans Helmut, 380
layerhoff, Ernest, 172, 184
lcDowell, D., 47
lcLeman, J., 184-85
leade, David, 39-42, 129
lerz, Annette, 130, 375, 376
lethuen, Charlotte, 387, 388, 389-90, 390 n. 43
letzger, Bruce, 130
letzger, Marcel, 394-95
leyers, Eric, 246 n. 24
lichaelis, J. D., 254 n. 50
lichaelis, W., 202
liller, James D., 212 n. 33

Mirecki, Paul, 328 n. 14
Mitchell, Margaret, 294, 376, 294 n. 21
Mitchell, Stephen, 352
Mitton, C. L., 183
Momigliano, Arnaldo, 525, 525 n. 108
Morton, A. Q., 184-85
Moss, Candida, 496, 497, 500, 500 n. 48
Muddiman, John, 188 n. 71
Mueller, Joseph G., 16 n. 16, 18
Muretow, M., 429
Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome, 194, 197, 215, 218 n. 50
Musurillo, Herbert, 502, 506

Nagel, Peter, 340
Nicklas, T., 331, 446 n. 116
Nida, Eugene, 245 n. 23
Niebuhr, N. W., 293-94
Nienhuis, David, 32 n. 8, 296, 296 nn. 26-27
Norelli, E., 333

Osiek, Carolyn, 388, 389, 390

Pearson, Birger, 403, 404, 433-34
Perler, Othmar, 464, 475 n. 63, 476 n. 66, 478
Pervo, Richard, 106 n. 53, 178 n. 44, 201, 201 n. 22, 368, 368 n. 3, 382, 439 n. 92
Pesce, Mauro, 333
Pilhofer, P., 118, 326, 326 n. 8, 327
Pink, Karl, 439, 441 n. 102
Piovanelli, P., 452, 452 n. 133, 453 n. 137
Plese, Zlatko, 116 n. 75
Plisch, Uwe-Karsten, 232 n. 81, 235 n. 89, 341, 416, 417
Plümacher, E., 269, 276
Plummer, A., 423
Poirer, Paul-Hubert, 413 n. 9

opkes, Wiard, 293
ortier-Young, Anthea, 74 n. 18
raeder, Susan, 269-70, 270 n. 79, 276
ratscher, Wilhelm, 287, 294
rior, Michael, 194, 197, 213, 213 n. 39, 215
rostmeier, Ferdinand-Rupert, 242 n. 8

.eed, Annette Yoshiko, 71, 313, 320-21
.eed, Jonathan, 245 n. 24, 246
.einmuth, E., 130 n. 122
.eumann, John, 269
.hode, J., 382 n. 21
.ichards, E. Randolph, 218-22, 219 n. 53
.ichards, William A., 194, 368 n. 3, 369
.ink, W. F., 426
.ist, M., 429, 429 nn. 59-60
.ius-Camps, Josep, 6

.obbins, Edward, 245
.obbins, Vernon, 269, 276
.oberge, Michel, 404-5, 406, 406 n. 104
.onchey, Silvia, 496, 497
.oose, Hanna, 168, 169 n. 29, 170
.ordorf, W., 379, 429
.osenmeyer, P., 43, 44-45, 44 n. 30
.othschild, Clare K., 3 n. 5, 323 n. 2
.owland, Christopher, 41, 72 n. 10, 73
.uinart, T., 461
.ussell, D. H., 72
.yme, R., 44

anders, E. P., 174 n. 39
axer, Victor, 496, 500
cheidweiler, F., 353, 360
chenke, Hans-Martin, 254, 413 n. 9

chermann, T., 397
chleiermacher, Friedrich, 192, 196 n. 14
chmidt, Carl, 426, 434, 437
chmidt, Darryl, 161-62, 268
chmidt, J. E. Chr., 156-57, 158, 184, 192
chmidt, K. M., 248 n. 31
chnackenburg, R., 422 nn. 31-32, 423
chneemelcher, Wilhelm, 422 n. 31
choedel, William, 496
chöllgen, G., 346, 385-86, 386 n. 34, 388
chutter, William, 253
chwegler, Albert, 252 n. 44
copello, Madeleine, 404 n. 99
egal, Judah, 364, 456
ellin, Gerhard, 183, 302, 303, 303 n. 45, 303 nn. 48-49, 304
emler, J. S., 240
eufert, W., 248
evenster, J. N., 287 n. 7
iebeck, Mohr, 218 n. 50
ilverstein, T., 452
int, J., 36
mid, H., 488, 488 n. 17
mith, J. Z., 234
mith, Morton, 133
mith, Terrence, 403, 450, 450 n. 126
peyer, Wolfgang, 2 n. 4, 26, 31, 32, 36-38, 37 n. 15, 49, *69* n. 1, 78, 79, 93, *99*, 119, 121, 123, 126, 130-31, 141 n. 149, 396 n. 72, 444, 532, 534, 538
picq, Ceslas, 214
tandhartinger, Angela, 115 n. 74, 155 n. 1, 174 n. 39, 178 n. 47, 181 n. 53, 182
tanton, Graham, 316, 319
teimer, Bruno, 15, 18, 385
tewart-Sykes, Alistair, 344, 345-46, 347-48, 345 n. 56, 387, 388, 396, 397, 397 nn. 77-78, 398

tone, Michael, 73
trange, James, 246 n. 24
trecker, Georg, 422 n. 30, 424 n. 39
treeter, B. H., 248
umney, Jerry, 215, 374
yme, Ronald, 26, 45, 46
yreeni, Kari, 291

'ardieu, Michel, 404, 404 n. 100
'estuz, Michel, 426, 427
'heissen, Gerd, 130 n. 122
'hompson, B., 516
'hompson, James Westfall, 502 n. 52
'hompson, M., 129
'hornton, Claus-Jürgen, 265, 268, 268 n. 67, 268 n. 70, 278, 278 n. 107, 280 n. 111, 325, 326 n. 8, 327 n. 8
'igchelaar, E., 446
'orm, Frederik, 79, 128-29
'rilling, W., 157, 160-61, 256
'rummer, P., 194, 368
'urner, C. H., 393
'urner, John, 412, 412 n. 7, 413 n. 9, 414

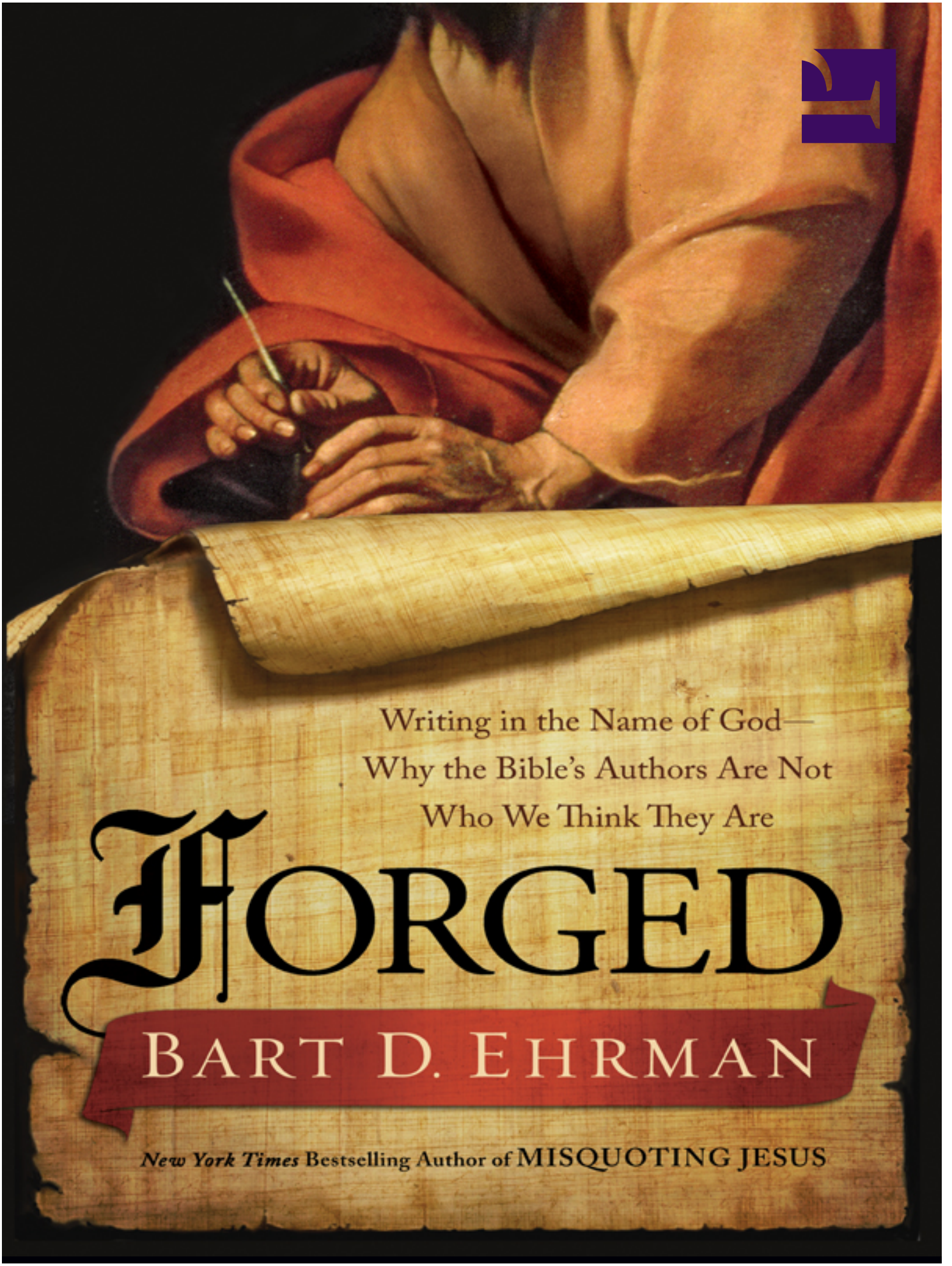
Ullmann, W., 309, 310 n. 62
Ussher, James, 394, 425, 460, 461, 462

'alantasis, Richard, 234, 234 n. 85, 235, 340, 341-42, 416, 417, 417 n. 20
'alla, Lorenzo, 25, 523
'an der Waerden, B. L., 109
'an Minnen, Peter, 446
an Unnik, W. C., 276
'erheyden, J., 331
'ielhauer, P., 267 n. 65
'ögtle, A., 130 n. 122, 298
'oss, Isaac, 461

Vouaux, Leon, 439

Wagner, Georg, 393-94
Wedderburn, A. J. M., 268, 276
Wehnert, J., 265, 268, 269 n. 73, 275
Wehrli, F., 13
Weijenborg, Reinoud, 6, 462
Westcott, Brooke Foss, 441
Whiston, William, 426
White, Benjamin, 429 n. *66*, 431
Williams, Rowan, 474-75
Wilson, Charles, 245, 246 n. 24
Wilson, R. McL., 178 n. 47
Wimsatt, W. K., 30 n. 3
Wischmeyer, Wolfgang, 525
Wisse, Frederik, 301
Wolter, Michael, 49, 50
Wood, Michael, 133-34, 533
Wrede, W., 157

Zahn, Theodore, 462, 464
Zembaty, Jane, 135
Zhmud, Leonid, 113
Zmijewski, Josef, 214


Writing in the Name of God—
Why the Bible's Authors Are Not
Who We Think They Are
FORGED
BART D. EHRMAN
New York Times Bestselling Author of MISQUOTING JESUS

Forged

Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are

Bart D. Ehrman

To Sierra, granddaughter extraordinaire

Contents

Introduction: Facing the Truth

1. A World of Deceptions and Forgeries
2. Forgeries in the Name of Peter
3. Forgeries in the Name of Paul
4. Alternatives to Lies and Deceptions
5. Forgeries in Conflicts with Jews and Pagans
6. Forgeries in Conflicts with False Teachers
7. False Attributions, Fabrications, and Falsifications: Phenomena Related to Forgery
8. Forgeries, Lies, Deceptions, and the Writings of the New Testament

Notes

Searchable Terms
Acknowledgments
About the Author
Other Books by Bart D. Ehrman
Credits
Copyright
About the Publisher

INTRODUCTION: FACING THE TRUTH

ON A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY in June, when I was fourteen years old, my mom told me that she and my dad were going out to play a round of golf. I did a quick calculation in my head. It would take them twenty minutes to get to the country club and about four hours to play eighteen holes. After a bit of downtime, they would drive home. I had five hours.

I called up my friend Ron down the street to tell him my parents would be gone all afternoon, and that I had snuck a couple of cigars out of my dad's consistently full stash. Ron liked what I was thinking and said that he had cobbed a few cans of malt liquor and hidden them out in his bushes. The joys of paradise opened before us.

When Ron came over, we headed upstairs to my bedroom, where we threw open the windows, lit up the cigars, popped the cans of brew, and settled in for an afternoon of something less than intellectual discourse. But after about ten minutes, to my horror, we heard a car pull into the driveway, the back door open, and my mom yell up the stairs that they were home. The golf course was crowded, and they had decided not to wait forty minutes to tee off.

Ron and I immediately switched into emergency gear. We flushed the cigars and the beer down the toilet and hid the cans in the trash, then pulled out two cans of deodorant and started spraying the room to try to cover up the smoke (which was virtually billowing out the window). Ron snuck out the back door, and

I was left alone, in a cold sweat, certain that my life was soon to be over.

I went downstairs, and my dad asked me the fated question. "Bart, were you and Ron smoking upstairs?"

I did what any self-respecting fourteen-year-old would do: I lied to his face. "No, dad, not me!" (The smoke was still heavy in the air as I spoke.)

His face softened, almost to a smile, and then he said something that stayed with me for a long time—forty years, in fact. "Bart, I don't mind if you sneak a smoke now and then. But don't lie to me."

Naturally I assured him, "I won't, dad!"

A Later Commitment to Truth

FIVE YEARS LATER, I was a different human being. Everyone changes in those late teenage years, of course, but I'd say my change was more radical than most. Among other things, in the intervening years I had become a born-again Christian, graduated from high school, gone off to a fundamentalist Bible college, Moody Bible Institute, and had two years of serious training in biblical studies and theology under my belt. At Moody we weren't allowed to smoke ("Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit," the New Testament teaches, and you don't want to pollute God's temple!), drink alcoholic beverages ("Be ye not drunk with wine," says the Bible; it didn't occur to me that it might be okay to be drunk with bourbon)—or, well, do lots of other things that most normal human beings at that age do: go to movies, dance, play cards. I didn't actually agree with the "conduct code" of the school (there was also a dress code, and a hair code for men: no long hair or beards), but my view was that if I decided to go there, it meant playing by the rules. If I wanted other rules, I

could go somewhere else. But more than that, I went from being a fourteen-year-old sports-minded, better than average student with little clue about the world or my place in it and no particular commitment to telling the truth to a nineteen-year-old who was an extremely zealous, rigorous, pious (self-righteous), studious, committed evangelical Christian with firm notions about right and wrong and truth and error.

We were heavily committed to the truth at Moody Bible Institute. I would argue, even today, that there is no one on the planet more committed to truth than a serious and earnest evangelical Christian. And at Moody we were nothing if not serious and earnest. Truth to us was as important as life itself. We believed in the Truth, with a capital T. We vowed to tell the truth, we expected the truth, we sought the truth, we studied the truth, we preached the truth, we had faith in the truth. "Thy Word is truth," as Scripture says, and Jesus himself was "the way, the truth, and the life." No one could "come to the Father" except through him, the true "Word become flesh." Only unbelievers like Pontius Pilate were confused enough to ask, "What is truth?" As followers of Christ, we were in a different category altogether. As Jesus himself had said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Along with our commitment to truth, we believed in objectivity. Objective truth was all there was. There was no such thing as a "subjective truth." Something was true or it was false. Personal feelings and opinions had nothing to do with it. Objectivity was real, it was possible, it was attainable, and we had access to it. It was through our objective knowledge of the truth that we knew God and knew what God (and Christ, and the Spirit, and everything else) was.

One of the ironies of modern religion is that the absolute commitment to truth in some forms of evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity and the concomitant view that truth is

objective and can be verified by any impartial observer have led many faithful souls to follow the truth wherever it leads—and where it leads is often *away* from evangelical or fundamentalist Christianity. So if, in theory, you can verify the "objective" truth of religion, and then it turns out that the religion being examined is verifiably *wrong,* where does that leave you? If you are an evangelical Christian, it leaves you in the wilderness outside the evangelical camp, but with an unrepentant view of truth. Objective truth, to paraphrase a not so Christian song, has been the ruin of many a poor boy, and God, I know, I'm one.

Before moving outside into the wilderness (which, as it turns out, is a lush paradise compared to the barren camp of fundamentalist Christianity), I was intensely interested in "objective proofs" of the faith: proof that Jesus was physically raised from the dead (empty tomb! eyewitnesses!), proof that God was active in the world (miracles!), proof that the Bible was the inerrant word of God, without mistake in any way. As a result, I was devoted to the field of study known as Christian apologetics.

The term "apologetics" comes from the Greek word *apologia,* which does not mean "apology" in the sense of saying you're sorry for something; it means, instead, to make a "reasoned defense" of the faith. Christian apologetics is devoted to showing not only that faith in Christ is reasonable, but that the Christian message is demonstrably true, as can be seen by anyone willing to suspend disbelief and look objectively at the evidence.

The reason this commitment to evidence, objectivity, and truth has caused so many well-meaning evangelicals problems over the years is that they—at least some of them—really *are* confident that if something is true, then it necessarily comes from God, and that the worst thing you can do is to believe something that is false. The search for truth takes you where the evidence leads you, even if, at first, you don't want to go there.

The more I studied the evangelical truth claims about Christianity, especially claims about the Bible, the more I realized that the "truth" was taking me somewhere I very much did not want to go. After I graduated from Moody and went to Wheaton College to complete my bachelor's degree, I took Greek, so that I could read the New Testament in its original language. From there I went to Princeton Theological Seminary to study with one of the great scholars of the Greek New Testament, Bruce Metzger; I did a master's thesis under his direction and then a Ph.D. During my years of graduate work I studied the text of the New Testament assiduously, intensely, minutely. I took semester-long graduate seminars on single books of the New Testament, studied in the original language. I wrote papers on difficult passages. I read everything I could get my hands on. I was passionate about my studies and the truth that I could find.

But it was not long before I started seeing that the "truth" about the Bible was not at all what I had once thought when I was a committed evangelical Christian at Moody Bible Institute. The more I saw that the New Testament (not to mention the Old Testament, where the problems are even *more* severe) was chock full of discrepancies, the more troubled I became. At Moody, I thought that all discrepancies could be objectively reconciled. But eventually I saw that in fact they could not be. I wrestled with these problems, I prayed about them, I studied them, I sought spiritual guidance, I read all I could. But as someone who believed that truth was objective and who was unwilling to believe what was false, I came to think that the Bible could not be what I thought it was. The Bible contained errors. And if it contained errors, it was not completely true. This was a problem for me, because I wanted to believe the truth, the divine truth, and I came to see that the Bible was not divine truth without remainder. The Bible was a very human book.

But the problems didn't stop there. Eventually I came to realize that the Bible not only contains untruths or accidental mistakes. It also contains what almost anyone today would call lies. That is what this book is about.

Truth in the History of Christianity

ONE COULD ARGUE THAT the obsession with truth in parts of evangelical Christianity today was matched by the commitment to truth in the earliest years of Christianity. This is one of the features of Christianity that made it distinctive among the religions of antiquity.

Most people today don't realize that ancient religions were almost never interested in "true beliefs." Pagan religions—by which I mean the polytheistic religions of the vast majority of people in the ancient world, who were neither Jewish nor Christian—did not have creeds that had to be recited, beliefs that had to be affirmed, or scriptures that had to be accepted as conveying divine truth. Truth was of interest to *philosophers,* but not to practitioners of religion (unless they were also interested in philosophy). As strange as this may seem to us today, ancient religions didn't require you to believe one thing or another. Religion was all about the proper practices: sacrifices to the gods, for example, and set prayers. Moreover, because religion was not particularly concerned with what you believed about the gods and because all of these religions allowed, even encouraged, the worship of many gods, there was very little sense that if one of the religions was right, the others were wrong. They could *all* be right! There were many gods and many ways to worship the gods, not a single path to the divine.

This view—the dominant view of antiquity—stands completely at odds with how most of us think about religion today, of

course. In our view, if Free-will Baptists are right, Roman Catholics are wrong; if Jews are right, Buddhists are wrong; if Muslims are right, Christians are wrong; and so on. But not in the ancient world. The worship of Zeus was no more "right" than the worship of Athena, Apollo, your city gods, or your family gods.

Another key difference between religions today and in antiquity is that the ancient polytheistic religions were not overly concerned with the afterlife. They were concerned about the present life, how to survive in a hard and capricious world, and how to live well: how to make sure the rain came and the crops grew; how to survive illness or combat; how to get enough to eat and drink; how to lead productive and fruitful lives; how to make the boy or girl next door fall madly in love with you.

Among the many things that made Christianity different from the other religions of the Roman Empire, with the partial exception of Judaism, is that Christians insisted that it did matter what you believed, that believing the correct things could make you "right" and believing the incorrect things could make you "wrong," and that if you were wrong, you would be punished eternally in the fires of hell. Christianity, unlike the other religions, was exclusivistic. It insisted that it held the Truth, and that every other religion was in Error. Moreover, this truth involved claims about God (there is only one, for example, and he created the world), about Christ (he was both divine and human), about salvation (it comes only by faith in Christ), about eternal life (everyone will be blessed or tormented for eternity), and so on.[1]

The Christian religion came to be firmly rooted in truth claims, which were eventually embedded in highly ritualized formulations, such as the Nicene Creed. As a result, Christians from the very beginning needed to appeal to authorities for what they believed. Do you believe that this view is true instead of that one? What is your authority for saying so? The ultimate authority was God, of course. But the majority of Christians came to think that

God did not speak the truth about what to believe directly to individuals. If he did, there would be enormous problems, as some could claim divine authority for what they taught and others could claim divine authority for the completely opposite teaching. Thus most Christians did not stress personal revelation to living individuals. Instead, they insisted that God had revealed his truth in earlier times through Christ to his apostles. The apostles at the beginning of the church were authorities who could be trusted. But when the apostles died out, where was one to go for an authority?

One could claim—and many in fact did—that the leaders of the churches who were appointed by the apostles could pass along their teachings, so that these leaders had authority equal to God himself. God sent Jesus, who chose his apostles, who instructed their successors, who passed along the sacred teachings to ordinary Christians.[2] Several problems with this view arose, however. For one thing, as churches multiplied, each of them could no longer claim to have as its leader someone who had known an apostle or even someone who knew someone who once knew an apostle. An even bigger problem was the fact that different leaders of churches, not to mention different Christians in their congregations, could claim they taught the apostolic truths. But these "truths" stood at odds with what other leaders and teachers said were the teachings of the apostles.

How was one to get around these problems? The obvious answer presented itself early on in the Christian movement. One could know what the apostles taught through the writings they left behind. These authoritative authors produced authoritative teachings. So the authoritative truth could be found in the apostolic writings.[3]

Even though this might sound like a perfect solution to the problem, the solution raised problems of its own. One involves a reality that early Christians may not have taken into account, but

that scholars today are keenly aware of. Most of the apostles were illiterate and could not in fact write (discussed further in Chapter 2). They could not have left an authoritative writing if their souls depended on it. Another problem is that writings started to appear that claimed to be written by apostles, but that contained all sorts of bizarre and contradictory views. Gospels were in circulation that claimed to be written by Jesus's disciples Peter, Philip, and Mary and his brothers Thomas and James. Letters appeared that were allegedly written by Paul (in addition to ones that he actually did write), Peter, and James. Apocalyptic writings describing the end of the world or the fate of souls in the afterlife appeared in the names of Jesus's followers John, Peter, and Paul. Some writings emerged that claimed to be written by Jesus himself.

In many instances, the authors of these writings could not actually have been who they claimed to be, as even the early Christians realized. The views found in these writings were often deemed "heretical" (i.e., they conveyed false teachings), they were at odds with one another, and they contradicted the teachings that had become standard within the church. But why would authors claim to be people they weren't? Why would an author claim to be an apostle when he wasn't? Why would an unknown figure write a book falsely calling himself Peter, Paul, James, Thomas, Philip, or even Jesus?

The answer should seem fairly obvious. If your name was Jehoshaphat, and no one (other than, say, your parents and siblings) had any idea who you were, and you wanted to write an authoritative Gospel about the life and teachings of Jesus, an authoritative letter describing what Christians should believe or how they should live, or an inspired apocalypse describing in detail the fate of souls after death, you could not very well sign your own name to the book. No one would take the Gospel of Jehoshaphat seriously. If you wanted someone to read it, you called

yourself Peter. Or Thomas. Or James. In other words, you lied about who you really were.

It is often said—even by scholars who should know better—that this kind of "pseudonymous" (i.e., falsely named) writing in the ancient world was not thought to be lying and was not meant to be deceitful. Part of what I'll be showing in this book is that this view is flat-out wrong (see Chapter 4). Ancient authors who talked about this practice of writing a book in someone else's name said that it was both lying and deceitful and that it was not an acceptable practice.

Many early Christian writings are "pseudonymous," going under a "false name." The more common word for this kind of writing is "forgery" (I give more precise definitions of these terms in Chapter 1). In the ancient world forgery was a bit different from today in that it was not, technically speaking, against the law. But even though it was not an illegal activity, it was a deceitful one that involved conscious lying, as the ancients themselves said.

The crucial question is this: Is it possible that any of the early Christian forgeries made it into the New Testament? That some of the books of the New Testament were not written by the apostles whose names are attached to them? That some of Paul's letters were not actually written by Paul, but by someone claiming to be Paul? That Peter's letters were not written by Peter? That James and Jude did not write the books that bear their names? Or—a somewhat different case, as we will see—that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not actually written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?

Scholars for over a hundred years have realized that in fact this is the case. The authors of some of the books of the New Testament were not who they claimed to be or who they have been supposed to be. In some instances that is because an anonymous writing, in which an author did not indicate who he was, was later named after someone who did not in fact write it.

Matthew probably did not write Matthew, for example, or John, John (see Chapter 7); on the other hand, neither book actually claims to be written by a person named Matthew or John. In other instances it is because an author lied about who he was, claiming to be someone he was not. As I have already intimated, some scholars have long been reluctant, and even opposed, to calling this authorial activity lying and to call the literary products that resulted forgeries. As I will explain at length in the following chapters, most of the scholars who have actually read what ancient authors say about the phenomenon have no such hesitancy.

It is true that the ancient authors who lied about their identity may well have felt they had a clear conscience, that what they did was completely justified, that they were ultimately in the right. They may have thought and believed, at least in their own minds, that they had very good reasons for doing what they did. But as we will see in later chapters, by ancient standards these authors engaged in fraudulent activities, and the books they produced were forgeries.

Let me conclude this introduction simply by saying that I have spent the past five years studying forgery in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, especially but not exclusively within Christianity. My goal all along has been to write a detailed scholarly monograph that deals with the matter at length. The book you're reading now is *not* that scholarly monograph. What I try to do in the present book is to discuss the issue at a layperson's level, pointing out the really interesting aspects of the problem by highlighting the results of my own research and showing what scholars have long said about the writings of the New Testament and pseudonymous Christian writings from outside the New Testament. The scholarly monograph to come will be much more thoroughly documented and technically argued. The present book, in other words, is not intended for my fellow scholars, who, if they read this one, will be doing so simply out of curiosity. It is,

instead, intended for you, the general reader, who on some level is, like me, interested in the truth.

CHAPTER ONE

A World of Deceptions and Forgeries

WHENEVER I TEACH ABOUT FORGERY, I think back to my first lecture on the subject, twenty-five years ago now, at Rutgers University. As odd as this might seem, forgery was on everyone's mind at the time. Only a few months earlier forgery had been front-page news for weeks in major newspapers around the world. The diaries of Adolf Hitler had been discovered, authenticated by one of the world's leading experts on the Führer, the British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper. The diaries had been purchased for millions of dollars, first by *Stern* magazine in Germany, then by Rupert Murdoch for English publishing rights. But just as they started to appear, they were shown to be worthless forgeries.[1]

The forger of the diaries was a West German named Konrad Kujau. Ironically, even before he perpetuated the biggest con job of modern times, his friends called him Connie. Kujau had grown up as a poor working-class fellow; at an early age he discovered an artistic ability that led him to a career of forgery. He spent some time in jail as a young adult, having been caught forging lunch vouchers. But he had a number of aliases, and the people to whom he sold the Hitler diaries were not assiduous in making a background check.

The Hitler diaries consisted of some sixty books of handwritten notes that Hitler himself had allegedly made during his time in power, from June 1932 to the very end in 1945. For collectors

of Nazi memorabilia, such a discovery would be priceless. We have a number of documents and paintings that Hitler produced, but nothing like this, an account of his daily activities, encounters, successes, excesses, companions, loves, hates, and rambling thoughts. When *Stern* had come into possession of the books and decided to publish them in 1984, the publishers consulted with Trevor-Roper, who, despite an initial suspicion that they must be a hoax, became convinced of the authenticity of the books upon a quick perusal of some of their pages. The documents looked old; they contained numerous pieces of accurate data and lots of asides and irrelevancies that one would expect in a personal diary. And there were so many of them! What forger would go to that much trouble?

Moreover, there was a plausible explanation for how they had managed to survive the war. It was well known that when defeat was imminent, Hitler had several metal boxes filled with his personal effects flown out of Berlin; but the plane had been shot down and its pilot killed. Local villagers near the wreck site pillaged the plane, and the boxes ended up in private hands. Collectors of memorabilia later paid for the materials, and one such collector, named Konrad Fischer (an alias for Konrad Kujau), had ended up with the diaries. They had allegedly been smuggled out of the East by his brother, a general in the East German army.

But in fact it was all a hoax by Kujau himself, who had learned to imitate Hitler's handwriting, had read authoritative biographies of the Führer to get his facts more or less straight, and had painstakingly produced the accounts over a three-year period in the early 1980s. To make the pages look aged and worn, he blotted them with tea and repeatedly slapped them on the table. And he fooled the experts, long enough, at least, to be paid $4.8 million for his efforts.

The day before the diaries were to be released to the public, however, Trevor-Roper started having second thoughts. Over the course of the next few days, after *Stern* had announced the most significant historical find in decades, other specialists were brought in. The diaries were shown beyond any doubt at all to be fakes. Forensics experts found that the paper, the glue, and the ink were all of post-1945 vintage; historians showed that the diaries were filled with errors.

Kujau was convicted of forgery, a crime by modern standards, though, as we'll see, not by ancient ones, and spent several years in prison. He emerged unrepentant, however, and spent a good bit of the rest of his life painting forgeries of great art—imitations of Monet, Rembrandt, and van Gogh—and selling them precisely as imitations. This eventually created a market for other forgers to produce and sell replicas of Kujau's imitations. As a climax to this seemingly never ending story, at the end of Kujau's life he produced an autobiography, which was never published. Instead, a different book appeared in his name, called *Die Originalität der Fälschung* ("The Originality of Forgery"). Kujau claimed, evidently in all truthfulness, that he had not written a word of it.

Forgeries in the Ancient World

WHEN I GIVE PUBLIC lectures on forgery, I am often asked, "Who would do such a thing?" The answer is, "Lots of people!" And for lots of different reasons. The most common reason today, of course, is to make money. Konrad Kujau may be the most infamous and egregious case in point, but he has many hundreds of lesser-known colleagues and disciples. The forgery trade continues to thrive; forgeries in the names of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Lord Byron, Robert Frost, and many, many others continue to flood the market, as recent literature on

modern forgery so aptly attests.[2] These forgeries are almost always produced in order to be sold as authentic. There was a good deal of that kind of activity in the ancient world as well (and far fewer forgery experts who could detect a forgery if they saw one), although it was not a major factor within early Christianity. This was for a simple reason: Christian books were not, by and large, for sale.

Other scoundrels today will occasionally forge a document just to see if they can get away with it. This too is something that occasionally happened in the ancient world. The most famous account is the well-known case of Dionysius the Renegade.

Dionysius was a literary scholar and philosopher of the third century BCE. He eventually earned the epithet "Renegade," because he had a falling out with his fellow Stoic philosophers when he came to realize that his philosophical views did not jibe with real life as he experienced it. Stoics taught that people should remove themselves, mentally and emotionally, from the pain and anguish of this life to experience inner tranquility of spirit. Dionysius for a long time subscribed to this view. But then he became very ill, experienced a good deal of pain, and started to think that his earlier philosophizing about pain was bogus in the face of pain itself. So he left the Stoics and was called by them a renegade.

What he is most famous for in the annals of history, however, is a ruse that he pulled on a fellow literary scholar, his former teacher but eventual opponent, Heraclides of Pontus. The ruse involved a forgery, and it was a pure set-up, produced to make Heraclides look bad.[3]

Dionysius wrote and put in circulation a tragic play he called the *Parthenopaeus,* claiming that it was the work of the famous Greek dramatist Sophocles. The play made its way into the hands of Heraclides, who had no reason to doubt its authenticity. Heraclides eventually quoted it to illustrate a point about Sophocles.

This is just what Dionysius was hoping for, a chance to show up his opponent. He triumphantly confronted Heraclides and told him that the play was forged, that in fact he himself had written it. Heraclides, however, did not believe it and insisted that Dionysius was lying. But Dionysius had an ace or two up his sleeve. He showed Heraclides that if he took the first letter of a series of lines in the first part of the play and strung them together as an acrostic, they spelled the name Pankalos, which happened to be the name of Dionysius's male lover.

Heraclides was still not convinced, and so Dionysius showed him two other acrostics embedded in the lines of the text. The first formed a poetic couplet:

An old monkey is not caught by a trap;
Oh yes, he is caught at last; but it takes time.

The other line was completely decisive:

Heraclides is ignorant of letters and is not ashamed of his ignorance.

We find nothing quite so hilarious or outrageous in the writings of the early Christians. In fact, there is scant evidence to suggest that any Christian authors forged documents simply in order to see if they could get away with it. Even so, there were plenty of early Christian forgers who produced lots of forged documents, probably for lots of reasons. As I pointed out in the Introduction, we still have numerous forged documents that emanated from the early church, numerous Gospels, Acts, letters, and apocalypses (these are the four literary genres of the New Testament), all of them claiming to be written by apostles.

Many of these noncanonical books are fascinating and still worth reading.[4] Among the Gospels, for example, there is an account allegedly written by Peter that gives a detailed narration of

the resurrection. This is striking because—most readers have never noticed this—the New Testament Gospels do not narrate the resurrection. They do say that Jesus was buried and indicate that on the third day his tomb was empty, but they do not narrate the account of his actually emerging from the tomb. There is such an account in the *Gospel of Peter,* however. In it Jesus walks out of the tomb supported by two angels who are as tall as mountains, although Jesus is taller still; behind them, out of the tomb, emerges the cross, which speaks out to God in heaven. Other "apostolic" Gospels tell yet other amazing stories about Jesus or record bizarre teachings supposedly spoken by him, Gospels allegedly written by Jesus's brother Thomas, his disciple Philip, and his female companion Mary Magdalene. All of these books claimed to be authentic, but each of them was classified as a "forgery" by other early Christians who did not believe the apostles had actually written them.

There are also noncanonical Acts, books that narrate the adventures of Jesus's apostles after his ascension, such as the *Acts of Paul,* in which Paul preaches that, to have eternal life, followers of Jesus must refrain from sex even if married and avoid marriage altogether if single. This book was fabricated by a church leader in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) in the second century. We know about it because a famous church father, Tertullian, indicates that the person was caught and put on trial in the church for producing the account and then unceremoniously removed from his leadership position.[5] Most church leaders did not appreciate fabricated documents. But there were plenty to go around. Today we still have extensive copies of Acts of John, Peter, Andrew, and Thomas as well as fragments of earlier works that no longer survive intact.

There were also forged letters, including a set of letters between Paul and the most famous philosopher of his day, Seneca, which showed not only that Paul was on intimate terms

with the greatest minds of the empire, but also that he was respected and revered by them. Some later church leaders maintained that these letters were authentic, but others thought they had been forged for the purpose of making Paul look good. There were also debates over the authenticity of other letters of Paul, and of Peter, and even of Jesus. Some of these other writings still survive.

So too forged apocalypses dotted the Christian literary landscape, including a fascinating account discovered in 1886 in a tomb in Egypt, a firsthand account allegedly written by Peter in which he is given a personal guided tour, by Jesus himself, of heaven and hell and the respective blessings of the saved and the gruesome torments of the damned. This book, as it turns out, almost made it into the New Testament, as there were church leaders well into the fourth century who claimed that it was Scripture. Others, though, claimed it was forged.

These are just a few of the documents that were disputed in the ancient world. Some early Christians claimed they really were written by apostles and belonged in the New Testament. Others insisted that they were not written by apostles, but were forgeries. How many other such documents were there? We will never know. At present we know of over a *hundred* writings from the first four centuries that were claimed by one Christian author or another to have been forged by fellow Christians.[6]

Early Christian Forgeries

MOST OF THE INSTANCES I have just mentioned are forgeries from after the days of the apostles themselves, from the second, third, and fourth Christian centuries. Most of the books of the New Testament, on the other hand, were written during the first century. Is there any evidence that forgery was

happening in this earlier period? In fact, there is very good evidence indeed, and it comes to us from the pages of the New Testament itself.

There are thirteen letters in the New Testament that claim to be written by Paul, including two to the Thessalonians. In the Second Letter to the Thessalonians we find a most intriguing verse in which the author tells his readers that they are not to be led astray by a letter "as if by us" indicating that the "day of the Lord" is almost here (2:2). The author, in other words, knows of a letter in circulation claiming to be by Paul that is not really by Paul. This other letter allegedly teaches an idea that Paul himself opposes. Who would create such a forged letter? Obviously someone who wanted to advance his own views about when the end would come and decided to do so with the authority of Paul, even though he was not Paul.

But there is a terrifically interesting irony connected with this passage. Second Thessalonians, in which the passage appears, is itself widely thought among scholars not to be by Paul, even though it claims to be written by him (we'll see the reasons for thinking this in Chapter 3). Is 2 Thessalonians itself a forgery in Paul's name? If so, why would it warn against a forgery in Paul's name? There can be little doubt about the answer: one of the "tricks" used by ancient forgers to assure readers that their own writings were authentic was to warn against writings that were not authentic. Readers naturally assume that the author is not doing precisely what he condemns.[7]

We have other interesting instances of this phenomenon in early Christian literature. Three hundred years later, at the end of the fourth century, there appeared a book that scholars have called the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This lengthy book, in eight volumes, gives instructions concerning how the church is to be organized and run by its leaders. The book claims to be written by a man named Clement, who was allegedly the fourth bishop of

Rome (i.e., an early "pope"), appointed by the apostle Peter himself to lead the great church. But in reality the book was written three centuries or so after Clement himself was in the grave. That is, it is a forgery. More than that, the book is called "apostolic" Constitutions because it passes along the advice and instructions of the apostles of Jesus themselves, often in the first person: "I, Peter," say to you this; "I, John," say to you this; "I, James," say to you this; and so on. One of the most fascinating instructions of the real-life author of this book (we don't know who actually wrote it) comes at the end, where he warns his readers not to read books that *claim* to be written by the apostles, but are not. In other words, he's telling his readers not to read books such as the one they are reading, an apostolic forgery. Why insert this instruction? Once again, as with 2 Thessalonians, it is because by doing so he throws his readers off the scent of his own deceit.

With 2 Thessalonians we are presented with a particularly interesting situation. No matter how one understands the matter, the book shows that there were almost certainly forgeries in Paul's name in circulation all the way back during the time of the New Testament writings. If scholars who think that 2 Thessalonians was *not* written by Paul are wrong—that is, if Paul really wrote it—then it shows that Paul himself knew of a forgery in his name that had come to the Thessalonian church. But if the other scholars are right, that Paul did not compose 2 Thessalonians, then this book *itself* is a forgery in Paul's name that was floating around in the church. Either way, there must have been Pauline forgeries already in the first century.

Are there other forgeries from the earliest of Christian times? I deal with this question at length later in the book, looking into evidence that a number of the books of the New Testament were not written by the people who are claimed to be their authors. For now I'm interested in noting that this is not simply a finding of modern scholarship. A number of the books of the New

Testament were disputed already in early Christianity, among the Christian scholars of the second to the fourth centuries, who were arguing over which books should be included in Scripture.

The most famous instance is the book of Revelation. A third-century Christian scholar of Alexandria, Egypt, named Dionysius, argued that the book was not actually written by Jesus's disciple John, the son of Zebedee. Dionysius's argument was compelling and continues to be compelling to scholars today. He maintained that the writing style of the book is so different from that of the Gospel of John that they could not have been written by the same person (modern scholars differ from Dionysius only in thinking that the Gospel too was probably not written by John). Dionysius thought there must have been two authors of the same name who later came to be confused as the same person. But it is interesting that Dionysius, according to the church father Eusebius, had a number of predecessors who had argued that Revelation was written not by a different man named John, but by a heretic named Cerinthus, who forged the account in order to promote his false teaching that there would be a literal future paradise of a thousand years here on earth.[8]

The small letter of Jude, allegedly written by Jesus's own brother, was also debated in the early church. Some Christians argued that it was not authentic, in part, according to the famous fourth-century Christian scholar Jerome, because the book quotes an apocryphal book called *Enoch* as if it were authoritative Scripture.[9] The book of 2 Peter was rejected by a number of early church fathers, as discussed by both Jerome and Eusebius, but none more straightforwardly than the notable Christian teacher of Alexandria Didymus the Blind, who argued that "the letter is false and so is not to be in the canon."[10] Peter, in other words, did not actually write it, according to Didymus, even though the author *claimed* to be Peter.

Other Christian teachers disputed whether 1 and 2 Timothy were actually by Paul, some claiming that their contents showed that he did not write them.[11] The book of Hebrews was particularly debated; the book does not explicitly claim to be written by Paul, but there are hints at the end that the author wants readers to *think* that he's Paul (see 13:22–25). For centuries its Pauline authorship was a matter of dispute. The book was finally admitted into the canon only when nearly everyone came to think Paul must have written it.

In short, there were long, protracted, and often heated debates in the early church over forged documents. Early Christians realized that there were numerous forgeries in circulation, and they wanted to know which books were written by their alleged authors and which were not. As we will see more fully later, practically no one approved of the practice of forgery; on the contrary, it was widely condemned, even in books that were themselves forged (such as 2 Thessalonians and the *Apostolic Constitutions*).

Most of this book will focus on examples of forgery in early Christianity. To make sense of the early Christian forgeries, however, we need to take a step back and consider the phenomenon of forgery in the ancient world more broadly. That will be the focus of the rest of this chapter. We begin with a very important discussion of the terms that I will be using.

The Terms of the Debate

THE FIRST TWO TERMS are especially technical and, although I won't be using them much, it is important to know what they mean. An "orthonymous" (literally, "rightly named") writing is one that really is written by the person who claims to be writing it. There are seven letters of Paul, out of the thirteen in the

New Testament that bear his name, that virtually everyone agrees are orthonymous, actually written by Paul.

A "homonymous" (literally, "same named") writing is one that is written by someone who happens to have the same name as someone else. In the ancient world, the vast majority of people did not have last names, and a lot of people had the same first names. This was as true among Christians as it was for everyone else. Lots of people were named John, James, and Jude, for example. If someone named John wrote the book of Revelation and simply called himself John, he wasn't necessarily claiming to be anyone but himself. When later Christians assumed that this John must be the disciple John, the son of Zebedee, it wasn't really the author's fault. He just happened to have the same name as another more famous person. The book is not forged, then. It is simply homonymous, assuming that John the son of Zebedee did not write it, a safe assumption for most critical scholars. It was included in the canon because of this mistaken identity.

Other writings are "anonymous," literally, "having no name." These are books whose authors never identify themselves. That is, technically speaking, true of one-third of the New Testament books. None of the Gospels tells us the name of its author. Only later did Christians call them Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and later scribes then added these names to the book titles. Also anonymous are the book of Acts and the letters known as 1, 2, and 3 John. Technically speaking, the same is true of the book of Hebrews; the author never mentions his name, even if he wants you to assume he's Paul.[12]

The term "pseudonymous" (literally, "falsely named") is a little more slippery, and I need to explain how I will be using it. Technically it refers to any book that appears under the name of someone other than the author, but there are two kinds of pseudonymous writings. Sometimes authors simply take a pen name.

When Samuel Clemens wrote *Huckleberry Finn* and signed it "Mark Twain," he was not trying to deceive his readers into thinking that he was someone famous; it was just a pen name to mask his own identity. So too when Mary Ann Evans wrote *Silas Marner* and signed it "George Eliot." This use of a pen name did not happen a lot in the ancient world, but it did happen on occasion. The Greek historian Xenophon, for example, wrote his famous work the *Anabasis* using the pen name Themistogenes; and the Greek philosopher Iamblichus wrote his treatise *On the Mysteries* under the made-up name Abammon. In these instances there does not appear to have been any real attempt to deceive readers into thinking that the author was someone famous.[13]

The other kind of pseudonymous writing involves a book that is circulated under the name of someone else, usually some kind of authority figure who is presumed to be well known to the reading audience. For this particular kind of pseudonymous writing I will be using the technical term "pseudepigraphy" (literally, "written under a false name"). A pseudepigraphal writing, then, is one that is claimed to be written by a famous, well-known, or authoritative person who did not in fact write it.

But as it turns out, there are also two kinds of pseudepigraphal writings. Sometimes a writing was published anonymously, with no author's name attached, for example, the Gospel of Matthew. But later readers and copyists asserted that they knew who had written it and claimed it was by a well-known, authoritative person, in this case the disciple Matthew. In writings of this sort, which are *wrongly attributed* to a well-known person, the author is not trying to deceive anyone.[14] He or she remained anonymous. It is only later readers who claimed that the author was someone else. This kind of pseudepigraphy, then, involves a "false ascription" a work is "ascribed" to someone who didn't write it.

The other kind of pseudepigraphy does involve a kind of intentional deceit by an author. This is when an author writes a work claiming to be someone else. This is what I am here calling forgery. My definition of a *forgery,* then, is a writing that claims to be written by someone (a known figure) who did not in fact write it.

Over the years I have had several people object to my use of the term "forgery," and I well understand the hesitancy of other scholars to use the term. In modern times, when we think of forgery, we think of highly illegal activities (forging precious stones, money, or books for profit) that can send a person to prison. Ancient forgers were not as a rule thrown in jail, because there simply weren't laws governing the production and distribution of literature. There were no copyright laws, for example. But ancient authors *did* see this kind of activity as fraudulent, they recognized it as deceitful, they called it lying (and other even nastier things), and they often punished those who were caught doing it. So when I use the term "forgery," I do mean for it to have negative connotations, in part because, as we will see, the terms used by ancient authors were just as negative, if not more so.

My use of the term "forgery," however, does not say anything about the legal status of the document in question or the criminal activity of the author. It is a technical term referring to one kind of pseudepigraphal writing, one in which an author knowingly claims to be someone else. One of the overarching theses of my book is that those who engaged in this activity in the ancient world were roundly condemned for lying and trying to deceive their readers.

Motivations for Forgery

IF, AS I SHOW later, forgery was widely condemned, why did people do it? And how did they justify what they were doing in their own eyes? Those will be two of the leading questions for the rest of this chapter. The question of "why" they did it is a bit complicated, and here I need to differentiate between two ideas that people sometimes confuse in their minds. These are the notions of "intention," on the one hand, and "motivation," on the other. I think the difference between the two can be easily explained.

If my wife asks me, "Why are you going to the store?" I could give a variety of answers. One answer might be, "To buy something for dinner." Another might be, "Because there is nothing in the fridge." These are actually two different kinds of answers. The first indicates what I *intend* to do once I'm at the store: I intend to buy some food for tonight. The second indicates what is *motivating* me to go to the store in the first place: I am motivated by the fact that there is no food in the house. Intentions are not the same as motivations. The "intention" is what you want to accomplish; the "motivation" is the reason you want to accomplish it.

This is also the case when it comes to forgers and their forgeries. There is a difference between a forger's intention and motivation. A forger's intention, in almost every instance, is to deceive readers about his identity, that is, to make readers believe that he is someone other than who he is. But he may have lots of different reasons (motivations) for wanting to do that.

Authors have always had numerous reasons for wanting to write a forgery. In the modern world, as we have already seen, the principal motivation is to make money, as in the case of Konrad Kujau and the Hitler diaries. This does not appear to be the main reason for forgeries back in antiquity. The market for such "original books" was limited then, because the book-selling industry was so modest—books could not be mass-produced and

widely published. Still, there were instances in which forged books could turn a profit, as we learn from a famous author named Galen, a second-century physician who lived in Rome.

Galen was extremely learned and one of the most prolific authors from the ancient world. This was a world that did not, for the most part, have public libraries for people to use. But on occasion a local king would start up a library, principally for scholars, and there was sometimes competition among libraries to acquire greater holdings than their rivals as a kind of status symbol. The two most important libraries in antiquity were those of Alexandria in Egypt and Pergamum in Asia Minor. According to Galen, the kings who built these libraries were keen to increase their holdings and were intent on getting as many original copies as they could of such authors as Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Having original copies of these writings was important in an age when scribes could and did make mistakes when reproducing the text. If you had the original, you knew you had the author's own words, not some kind of error-ridden copy botched by the local scribe. So these two libraries were willing to pay cash on the barrelhead for original copies of their coveted authors' works.

You'd be amazed how many "original" copies of Plato, Aristotle, and Euripides start showing up, when you are willing to pay gold for them. According to Galen, forgeries started to appear by unscrupulous authors who simply wanted the money.[15]

We have seen another motivation, or combination of motivations, in the case of Dionysius the Renegade. One could argue that Dionysius perpetrated his fraudulent play, the *Parthenopaeus,* principally in order to see if he could get away with it. Or he may have done it to make a fool out of his nemesis, Heraclides. We have other instances in the ancient world of a similar motivation, to pull the wool over someone's, or everyone's, eyes. As it turns out, some such motivation may still be at work in our

world today, as some scholars have thought that one of the most famous "discoveries" of an ancient Gospel in the twentieth century was in fact a forgery by the scholar who claimed to have discovered it. This is the famous *Secret Gospel of Mark* allegedly found by Morton Smith in 1958.[16]

Other authors forged documents for political or military ends. The Jewish historian Josephus, for example, reports that an enemy of Alexander, the son of King Herod, forged a letter in Alexander's name in which he announced plans to murder his father. According to Josephus, the forger was a secretary of the king who was "a bold man, cunning in counterfeiting anyone's hand." But the plan back-fired; after producing numerous forgeries, the man was caught and "was at last put to death for it."[17]

Political forgeries were usually not treated kindly. But sometimes they worked. In the third century the Roman emperor Aurelian had a private secretary, named Eros, who had incurred his master's anger and was about to be punished. To forestall the outcome, he forged a list of names of political leaders whom the emperor had supposedly decided to have executed for treason and put the forged list into circulation. The men on the list rose up and assassinated the emperor.[18]

Sometimes the motivation for a forgery was less political than religious—to defend religious institutions or practices or to defend one's religious claims against those of opponents. One of the more humorous accounts occurs in the writings of the second-century pagan author Lucian of Samosata, a brilliant wit and keen critic of all things hypocritical. One of Lucian's hilarious treatises, *Alexander the False Prophet,* is directed against a man named Alexander, who wanted to set up an "oracle"—that is, a place where a god would communicate with humans—in the town of Abunoteichos. Alexander was a crafty fellow who knew that he had to convince people that the god Apollo really had decided to communicate through him, Alexander, at this newly

founded place of prophecy, since he planned to receive payments for being able to deliver Apollo's pronouncements to those who would come to inquire. So, according to Lucian, Alexander forged a set of bronze tablets and buried them in one of the oldest and most famous of Apollo's temples, in the city of Chalcedon. When the tablets were then dug up, word got around about what was written in this "miraculous" find. On these tablets Apollo declared that he was soon to move to take up residence in a new home, in Abunoteichos. Alexander then established the oracle there and attracted a huge following, thanks in no small measure to the forged writings in the name of the god he claimed to represent.

An example of a Jewish forgery created to support Judaism can be found in the famous *Letter of Aristeas*.[19] Aristeas was allegedly a pagan member of the court of the Egyptian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BCE). In this letter "Aristeas" describes how the king decided to include a copy of the Jewish Scriptures in his expanding library, and so he made arrangements with the Jewish high priest in Israel to send scholars to Egypt who could translate the sacred texts from their original Hebrew language into Greek. Seventy-two scholars were sent, and through miraculous divine intervention they managed to produce, individually, precisely the same wording for their translations of the Scriptures. Since the *Letter of Aristeas* is allegedly by a non-Jew, giving a more or less "disinterested" account of how the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, it has all the appearance of stating the facts "as they really were." But in reality, the letter is a forgery, written by a Jew in Alexandria in the second century BCE. It was written, in part, in order to show the divine inspiration of the Jewish sacred texts, even in their Greek translation.

As already intimated in earlier examples, sometimes forgeries were created with the express purpose of making a personal

enemy look bad (as with Dionysius the Renegade) or getting an opponent into serious trouble (as with the person who forged a letter to King Herod). As it turns out, this is one of the best-attested motivations for creating forgeries in the ancient world. The Roman poet Martial, author of a large number of witty and very funny poems, complains in several places that others have forged poems in his name that were either very bad or in very bad taste, precisely in order to make Martial himself look bad.[20] Even more slanderous is an episode reported by the historian of philosophy Diogenes Laertius, who indicates that an enemy of the famous philosopher Epicurus, a rival named Diotimus, forged fifty obscene letters in Epicurus's name and put them in circulation. Epicurus already had a problem with having a (totally undeserved) bad reputation as someone addicted to pleasure. These forgeries simply added fuel to the fire.[21]

Or consider the case of Anaximenes, as reported to us by a Greek geographer of the second century CE, Pausanias. Anaximenes was a clever but ill-natured fellow who had a quarrel with a famous public speaker named Theopompus. In order to strike out at his enemy, claims Pausanias, Anaximenes wrote a treatise in the writing style of Theopompus, naming himself as Theopompus. In this treatise he spoke abusively of the citizens of three chief Greek cities, Athens, Sparta, and Thebes. Once the treatise circulated in these cities, Theopompus became very much a persona non grata, even though he had nothing to do with it.[22]

Other forgers produced their work for more noble ends, for example, to provide hope for their readers. One of the most common forms of forgery in Jewish writings around the time of early Christianity is the literary genre known as the apocalypse. An apocalypse (from the Greek meaning a "revealing" or an "unveiling") is a text that reveals the truth of the heavenly realm to mortals to help them make sense of what is happening here on earth. Sometimes this truth is revealed through bizarre and highly

symbolic visions that the author allegedly sees and that are explained by some kind of angelic interpreter. An example is in the book of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible. At other times the author is said to be taken up to heaven to see the ultimate truths of the divine realm that make sense of the horrible events transpiring here on earth. A Christian example is the book of Revelation in the New Testament.

These books are meant to inspire hope in their readers. Even though things seem to be completely out of control here on earth, even though there is rampant pain and misery and suffering, even though wars, famines, epidemics, and natural disasters are crushing the human race, even though things seem to be completely removed from God's hand—despite all this, everything is going according to plan. God will soon make right all that is wrong. If people will simply hold on for a little while longer, their trust in God will be vindicated, and he will intervene in the course of things here on earth to restore peace, justice, and joy forever.

Apocalypses are almost always written pseudonymously in the name of some renowned religious figure of the past.[23] In Christian circles we have apocalypses in the names of Peter, Paul, and the prophet Isaiah. In Jewish circles we have apocalypses in the names of Daniel, Enoch, Abraham, and even Adam! Scholars typically claim that these books cannot be considered forgeries, because writing them pseudonymously was all part of the task; the literary genre requires them, more or less, to be written by someone who would "know" such things, that is, someone highly favored by God. But I think this view is too simplistic. The reality is that ancient people really did believe that they were written by the people who claimed to be writing them, as seen repeatedly in the ancient testimonies.[24] The authors of these books knew it too. They assumed false names precisely because their writings would prove more effective that way.

This relates to the single most important motivation for authors to claim they were someone else in antiquity. Quite simply, it was to get a hearing for their views. If you were an unknown person, but had something really important to say and wanted people to hear you—not so they could praise you, but so they could learn the truth—one way to make that happen was to pretend you were someone else, a well-known author, a famous figure, an authority.

Thus, for example, if you wanted to write a philosophical treatise in which you dealt with some of the most confounding ethical problems facing the world, but you were not a famous philosopher, you might write the treatise and claim that you were, signing it Plato or Aristotle. If you wanted to produce an apocalypse explaining that suffering here on this earth is only temporary and that God would soon intervene to overthrow the forces of evil in this world, and you wanted people to realize this was a message that needed to be heard and proclaimed, you wouldn't sign it with your own name (the *Apocalypse of Joe*), but the name of a famous religious figure (the *Apocalypse of Daniel*). If you wanted to narrate a Gospel of Jesus's most important teachings, but in fact were living a hundred years after Jesus and didn't have any real access to what Jesus said, you would write down the sayings you found most compelling and claim to be someone who had actually heard Jesus speak, calling your book the *Gospel of Thomas* or the *Gospel of Philip*.

This motivation was at work in both Christian and non-Christian circles. We know this because ancient authors actually tell us so. For example, a commentator on the writings of Aristotle, a pagan scholar named David, indicated: "If someone is uninfluential and unknown, yet wants his writing to be read, he writes in the name of someone who came before him and was influential, so that through his influence he can get his work accepted."[25]

This is the case with the one instance we have of a Christian forger who was caught and who later explained in writing what he did. In the fifth Christian century, a church leader named Salvian lived in Marseille. As did many others in his day Salvian decided, with his wife, to express his devotion to God by renouncing the world and taking on an ascetic form of life. Salvian was outraged by the worldliness of the church and by church members who were more concerned with personal comfort and wealth than with the demands of the gospel. So he wrote a letter called *Timothy to the Church*. Written in an authoritative style, the letter seemed to its readers actually to have been written by Timothy, the famous companion of the apostle Paul four hundred years earlier. But somehow Salvian's bishop came to suspect that Salvian had written it. He confronted Salvian with the matter, and Salvian admitted that he had done it.

But Salvian was a defensive fellow, and so he wrote an explanation for why he had produced a pseudonymous letter. As defensive individuals often do, Salvian made lots of excuses. The name Timothy, for example, literally means "honored by God," and so, he said, he used that name to show that he wrote for the honor of God. His main defense, though, was that he was a nobody, and if he himself wrote a letter to the churches, no one would pay attention. Or as he put it in his written defense, the author had "wisely selected a pseudonym for his book for the obvious reason that he did not wish the obscurity of his own person to detract from the influence of his otherwise valuable book."[26]

By writing in the name of Timothy, on the other hand, he hoped to get a reading. His views were important enough for him to adopt a false name. There is nothing in the story to suggest that Salvian's bishop accepted this excuse with equanimity (the story is related to us by Salvian, not his bishop). On the contrary, if the bishop was like every other reader from the ancient world

who comments on such things, he was not at all pleased that Salvian had lied about his identity.

Forgers' Techniques

WE ARE NEVER TOLD how Salvian's bishop came to realize that the letter allegedly by Timothy was in fact written by his presbyter, Salvian. But it is probably not too hard to figure out. The letter addressed major concerns that Salvian himself had had and that he no doubt had articulated repeatedly among his fellow churchgoers and the church leaders. Since he was a literate person, he may well have written other treatises on this and related subjects. If his bishop knew Salvian's ultimate concerns and had read his other writings, so that he was familiar with his writing style, he may have put two and two together and realized that this letter, which suddenly appeared out of nowhere, was a modern production written pseudonymously.

Very few forgers in the ancient world were actually caught red-handed.[27] The reasons should seem fairly obvious. For one thing, ancient scholars who were invested in detecting forgeries did not have the sophisticated methods of analysis that we have today, with our computers, databases, intricate analyses of writing style, and so on. An ancient scholar frequently *could* tell that a literary text was not by the same author who wrote another text (e.g., that the book of Revelation was not written by the same author who wrote the Fourth Gospel). But it's much easier to say who did *not* write a book (Paul did not write Hebrews) than who *did* write it (Ephesians, if not by Paul, was written by whom?).

Even more important, forgers went out of their way not to get caught. Most of the time, they were successful. In one of the fascinating modern discussions of forgery, Anthony Grafton, of Princeton University, shows that over the centuries the art of

forgery became increasingly refined as the art of detecting forgery improved its methods. The better scholars became at recognizing a forgery, the better forgers got at avoiding detection. This compelled the scholars to refine their methods, which in turn drove the forgers to improve their craft.[28]

Ancient forgers typically used several methods to escape detection. First and most obviously, anyone forging a document in the name of a well-known author did his level best to imitate the author's writing style and vocabulary. Everyone has a distinctive style of writing, and every style, in principle, can be imitated. Less skillful imitators simply recognized unusual words commonly used by an author and used those words a lot (sometimes much more than the author being imitated). Others tried to imitate the distinctive ways the author used grammar: sentence length, use of participial phrases, use of sentence fragments, and so on. For highly educated authors, this matter of imitating writing style was almost second nature; in the advanced education of "rhetorical" schooling that the upper-class elite received, a regular exercise involved writing an account or a speech in the style of a famous author or speaker. The most highly educated people in the empire were trained to do this as a matter of course.[29] Most of those people, of course, were not involved in the business of forgery.

The fact that a forger tried to imitate an author's style can make it difficult to detect forgeries. But the reality is that some people were more skilled at it than others. Just as most people today couldn't forge a Rembrandt if their life depended on it, so too most people can't sound "just like" Aristotle, Plutarch, or Paul.

A second trick of forgers was to include verisimilitudes in their writings. The term "verisimilitude" refers to a statement, a comment, or an off-the-cuff remark that makes a writing look "very similar" to what you would expect the alleged author to

have said. Forgers would make personal comments about the recipients of a letter, even if in fact they were not actually sending it to anyone. Why say you'll be praying for the letter's recipients during their time of persecution, if you're not actually sending it to people experiencing persecution? Because if you say that, it certainly *sounds* as though you're sending it to those experiencing persecution! Why ask for a personal favor from a person you're writing to, if you're not really writing to that person? ("Hey, James, be sure to say hello to your mother for me; and don't forget to bring that book that I left at your house.") Because there's no better way to make it look as if the letter is authentic. Why fabricate names of recipients, your past relationship with these recipients, remembered experiences you've shared, and so on? All of these add credibility to your writing, making it look as though you really are writing this person, at this time, in this situation, even if you're writing three hundred years later to no one in particular.

We've already seen one kind of verisimilitude in our earlier discussion. In both 2 Thessalonians from the first century and the *Apostolic Constitutions* three hundred years later, the pseudonymous author tells his readers not to read pseudonymous writings. Or to be more precise, the forger warns his readers not to read forgeries. Why? In part because it makes readers less likely to suspect that the book they have is itself a forgery. That is, it's a kind of verisimilitude.

One final technique used by some forgers involves a "discovery narrative." If a book shows up this week claiming to have been written two hundred years ago, one might well wonder where it has been all this time. Forgers sometimes begin or end their writing by describing what has led to the book's disappearance and discovery. For example, an author might begin a book by explaining that he had a dream, and in this dream he was told to dig a deep hole on the south side of the oak tree in the field

across the stream from his farm. When he dug the hole, he found an ancient wooden box. Inside the box was a deteriorating manuscript. He has now copied this manuscript out by hand, and this is it, a revelation given directly by Christ to the apostle James and hidden from the world until now.

The book then claims to have been written by James, as "copied" by the discoverer of the manuscript. The book is not widely known, because it has been hidden all these years. But now it has come to light, and here it is. Except it's not really here. What is here is a book not written by James, but by a forger claiming to be James, who has conveniently included an explanation for why no one has ever heard of this book before.

Ancient Views of Forgery

I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED that scholars are sometimes loath to use the term "forgery" for pseudepigraphal writings in which an author claims to be someone else. Later, I deal at greater length with what some scholars have claimed about this phenomenon in order to avoid thinking of such books as forgeries. This will come in Chapter 4, after we have had two chapters of data to help us assess these claims. As it turns out, many New Testament scholars who make pronouncements on forgery ("It wasn't meant to be deceitful." "No one thought of it as lying." "It wasn't looked down upon.") simply haven't read what the ancient sources say about it. Throughout this book it will become quite clear from the ancient writings themselves that even though forgery was widely practiced, it was also widely condemned and treated as a form of lying. To get us started here, I want to give just a few examples, which could easily be multiplied, of how ancients thought and talked about the practice of forgery.

The first thing to note is that in virtually every instance in which an ancient author mentions forgery, he condemns it. There are a few exceptions, which I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 4. But these exceptions really are exceptional, for reasons we'll see. By far the dominant discourse in the ancient world opposed forgery and saw it as a deceitful and illicit practice. That doesn't mean that people didn't engage in the practice—adultery is usually seen as a deceitful and illicit practice today, but that doesn't stop a lot of people. Despite the condemnations of it, the practice of forgery thrived in antiquity.

One of the more famous stories of forgery involves the second-century Roman physician Galen, whom I mentioned earlier. In one of his surviving writings, Galen gives an autobiographical account in which he tells of detecting a forgery. As he relates it, he was one day walking down a street in Rome and was passing by a bookseller's shop. In the window were two men arguing about a book that was allegedly written by Galen! One man was heatedly arguing that Galen had in fact written the book; the other was insisting that the writing style was all wrong, that Galen could not have written it. This episode warmed the cockles of Galen's heart, since in fact he had *not* written the book. So he went home and wrote a book, which we still have today. Sometimes the book is called *How to Recognize Books Written by Galen*.

Did Galen think it was an acceptable practice for someone else to write in his name? Obviously not. Nor did anyone else who discovered forgeries in his own name. I earlier mentioned the poet Martial, who was incensed that other poets tried to pass off their own work (which he considered vastly inferior) as his. Among Christians we have outraged complaints about forgeries in the writings of Origen, Jerome, and Augustine. Forgery was so widely condemned in antiquity that even forgers condemned

forgery—as we have seen in the case of 2 Thessalonians and the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

Some scholars have argued, strenuously, but without much evidence, that it was a common and accepted practice in schools of philosophy to write a philosophical treatise and sign your master's name to it (Plato, Pythagoras, etc.), rather than your own, and that no one looked askance at this practice. As we will see in Chapter 4, there is little evidence indeed that this happened. Ask a modern-day scholar who claims that in antiquity this was a widespread practice to cite an ancient source for it. In almost every instance, you will find a tongue-tied scholar.[30]

That forgery was widely condemned in antiquity can be seen by some of the terms that were used to describe the practice, most of which were at least as negative as the modern term "forgery." In Greek the two most common words to describe literary texts whose authors falsely claim to be a well-known figure are *pseudos,* which means "a falsehood" or "a lie," and *nothos,* which means "an illegitimate child," with connotations similar to our modern word "bastard."[31]

With respect to the first word, some scholars have stressed that *pseudos* does not have to have the negative connotation of a bald-faced lie, since it is sometimes used simply to indicate information that is incorrect, a falsehood. And that is certainly true, in some contexts. But it means that only in contexts in which those speaking the falsehood do not realize that what they are saying is an error. When a person speaks something that is false, knowing that it is false, *pseudos* always means what "lie" means in English: an intentional falsehood with the intent of deceiving hearers or readers into thinking that it is right. There can be no question which connotation applies to ancient forgeries. The person who wrote the *Gospel of Peter,* claiming to be Jesus's disciple Simon Peter, some sixty years after Peter's death—did he realize that he was not in fact Simon Peter? Unless he was a

lunatic, then of course he did. He intentionally claimed to be someone he was not. In Greek that would be called a *pseudos;* in English we would call it a lie.

The other term, *nothos,* might seem a bit puzzling. It is often translated "spurious," which may be accurate enough, but does not carry the same connotations as the Greek word, which refers typically to a bastard child. The logic of the term in the context of forgeries is clear. If a child born out of wedlock is raised by his mother and her husband (who is not the child's father), then the child does not "belong," by blood, to his alleged father; they are not related. Moreover, in antiquity, the child had no legal rights. So too with a literary text. If it goes under the name of an author who did not in fact produce it, then it is not actually related or legally connected to that person, but derives from someone else. So it is called a *nothos,* an illegitimate child, a text that does not belong to the author claimed for it.

Both of these terms are negative, not neutral, and they show what ancients thought about the practice of forgery. An author who produces a writing in the name of someone else has produced a "false writing," "a lie," "an illegitimate child," or a "bastard." Similar words are used by Latin writers for the act of forgery, for example, words that mean "to lie," "to falsify," "to fabricate," "to adulterate," "to counterfeit."

Contrary to what some scholars have claimed (again, see Chapter 4) forgers in the ancient world typically wanted to deceive their readers by claiming to be persons of authority and standing. This has been long recognized by the real experts in ancient forgery.[32] And a moment's reflection shows why this must be the case. Consider the motivations for forgery mentioned earlier. Forgers who wanted to see if they could get away with it, to see if they could pull the wool over someone's eyes, would scarcely have tried to make their ploy transparent and obvious; they would have truly wanted to deceive people. If they wanted to

make money by producing an "original" copy of, say, a dialogue of Plato, they wouldn't get very far if everyone knew who they really were. If they wanted to justify a political institution or religious practice by citing the views of an authority or wanted to have their own views accepted as authoritative even if they themselves were completely unknown, it would make no sense to claim to be someone else knowing full well that no one would believe you.

That forgery was not a transparent fiction is evidenced as well by the negative things people say about it in the ancient sources—the practice, as I have argued, is condemned in virtually every instance it is discussed. Moreover, the reactions to forgers when they are caught show quite clearly that they meant to deceive, that they were often successful, and that people were not at all pleased when they discovered the truth. Galen and Martial were incensed to find someone else claiming their name for writings they did not produce. And sometimes the reaction was even more hostile.

The first time we hear of a forger being discovered occurs all the way back in the fifth century BCE, in the writings of the famous Greek historian Herodotus.[33] In a puzzling and enigmatic passage, Herodotus speaks of Onomacritus of Athens, who had invented an oracle (i.e., a prophecy from a divine being) and ascribed it to the ancient bard Musaeus, a mythical figure thought to be able to predict the future. This oracle indicated that a certain group of islands would sink into the sea. It is hard to understand why Onomacritus forged the oracle or why people were upset by it. But they were. The ruler of Athens, Hipparchus, banished Onomacritus from the city; he fled Greece and ended up in Persia. On yet other occasions Onomacritus was thought to have forged other oracles and was roundly chastised for it by other ancient authors, such as Plutarch.[34]

Sometimes the punishment for forgery was even more harsh. Earlier I mentioned the fifty obscene letters that the philosopher Diotimus forged in the name of Epicurus in order to sully his reputation. According to one ancient source, Epicurus's followers were not amused. One of them, a man named Zeno, tracked Diotimus down and murdered him for it.[35] This can be compared with the account already mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus, who indicates that someone forged a letter in the name of Alexander, son of King Herod, indicating Alexander's plan to assassinate his father. As we have seen, the forger was the king's own secretary, who, according to Josephus, "was at last put to death for it."

From all of the discussions of forgeries in ancient sources, I think we can safely draw several major conclusions. Forgery was widely practiced in the ancient world, among pagans, Jews, and Christians. Forgers, motivated by a range of factors, intended to deceive their readers. Ancient authors who discuss the practice condemned it and considered it a form of lying and deceit. Forgers who were caught were reprimanded or punished even more severely.

Possible Justifications for Forgery

THE MOST THOROUGH STUDY of ancient forgery ever undertaken, by the Austrian classical scholar Wolfgang Speyer, maintains: "Every forgery feigns a state of affairs that does not correspond to the actual facts of the case. For this reason forgery belongs to the realm of lying and deception."[36] This view coincides perfectly well with the one I have been trying to make in this chapter, but it leaves us with a problem. When we are considering Christian forgeries, in particular, we are dealing with writings produced by followers of Jesus, who presumably

ascribed to Jesus's ethical teachings and the moral norms set forth in the Hebrew Scriptures. Surely they knew that lying and deception were wrong. Why would they do what they knew was wrong? And surely the question applies to pagans and Jews as well, who as a whole were just as ethical as Christians. Why would any of them go against their own ethical views?

On one level, of course, the question is silly. All people do things they know are wrong. But I mean the question at a deeper level. Did the forgers who perpetrated their fraud think that they were justified in lying? Is lying ever justified? I return to this issue in Chapter 8, but for now I should at least set the stage by asking a more general question. What did people in antiquity think about lying and deceit?

Asking what ancient people thought about lying is like asking modern people—it depends completely on whom you ask. Some think lying is never acceptable under any circumstances; others think that in some circumstances it is the ethical thing to do. Yet others think nothing at all about lying whenever they feel like it, thank you very much!

Some ancient Greek philosophers, notably Aristotle, stressed the importance of normally being truthful.[37] But most philosophers thought there could be exceptions. Xenophon, for example, reports Socrates as saying it is a *good* thing to lie to a sick son or a friend who wants to commit suicide, if you can stop the person from doing so.[38] Socrates also said that it is useful for a field general to lie to his disheartened troops in battle, telling them that support troops are soon to arrive, in order to drive them to fight with greater valor; or for a parent to deceive a child into taking some unpleasant medicine that will be good for her. Plato taught that some lies can be useful, such as those doctors might tell patients for their own good or those rulers of a country might tell their people in order to ensure the healthy functioning of society. As one ancient writer, Heliodorus, put it: "A lie is good when it

benefits the one who speaks it without doing harm to the one who hears."[39]

But what about Christians? Weren't they taught always to tell the truth? That is certainly what the great fifth-century church theologian Augustine taught in his two treatises devoted to "lying." It is never, ever, under any circumstances permissible to lie. This view of Augustine's was not based on a simplistic sense that it is always good to tell the truth, but on deep theological understandings about what it means to be truly human in relationship to the God of truth, who himself became fully human.[40]

But lots of other Christian thinkers, both before and after Augustine, thought otherwise. Some, such as the important Christian thinker Clement of Alexandria at the end of the second century, as well as his Alexandrian compatriot at the beginning of the third, Origen—arguably the most important theologian of the church before Augustine—agreed with Plato about the "medicinal lie": if a doctor's lie will impel a patient to take her medicine, it is ethically justified.[41] Both of them also pointed out that in the Old Testament, God himself appears to use deception at times. When God told Jonah to proclaim to the city of Nineveh that in forty days it would be overthrown, he obviously knew full well that the people would repent and that he would stay his hand of judgment. God never did plan, then, to overthrow the city, even though that's what he told his prophet to proclaim. Sometimes a deceptive statement can do a world of good.

There are plenty of other examples in Scripture in which the lies of God's chosen ones lead to good ends. If Abraham had not lied about his wife Sarah ("she's my sister"), he would have been killed, and the nation of Israel would never have come into existence (Gen. 12). Or if Rahab the prostitute had not lied about where the Israelite spies were hiding, they may have been killed and the children of Israel may never have been able to conquer

the promised land (Josh. 2). Examples could be multiplied. Sometimes lying is the right thing to do.

Is that what forgers thought? That lying about who they were was worth it? That the good effects of their deception outweighed the bad? That the ends justified the means?

I'm afraid we may never know what drove these people to do what they did. We simply can't peer into their hearts and minds to see what they were thinking, deep down, when they decided to hide their own identity and to claim, deceitfully, that they were someone else. Their readers, had they known, would probably have called them liars and condemned what they did. But in their own eyes, their conscience may have been free from blame, and their motives may have been as pure as the driven snow. They had a truth to convey, and they were happy to lie in order to proclaim it.

CHAPTER TWO

Forgeries in the Name of Peter

UP TO THIS POINT IN my discussion of ancient lying, deception, and forgery I have been using the term "truth" in a very simple sense, to mean something like "correct information." In reality, though, truth and its opposite, falsehood, are complex. I think we all recognize this deep down, even if we haven't given it a good deal of thought. When we watch a movie, we often ask, "Is this a true story?" By that we mean, "Is this something that really happened?" If the answer is yes, then we somehow feel assured and comforted that the events took place, and so, as a story, it is "truer" than one that is just made up. But even then we never think that absolutely everything found in the movie—all of the characters, the dialogue, the individual scenes, and so on—is absolutely and completely the way it "really" happened. We allow for a kind of poetic license of distortion, even when acknowledging that the story is somehow "true."

One could easily make the case that a movie can be true in a deeper sense even if it is about something that never happened. This has been my view for many years, and it used to drive my kids crazy when they were young. We'd be watching a movie, and they'd say, "Dad, is this a true story?" And I'd almost always say yes. But then they'd remember that I tend to have a different view of things, and they'd ask the follow-up question, "No, Dad, I mean did this really happen?" I'd say no, and they'd continue to be puzzled.

As some of my readers may be. How can a story be "true" if it didn't happen? In point of fact, there are all sorts of true stories that didn't happen, as everyone will admit, I think, if they think about it a bit. When I try to illustrate this with my students, I usually rehearse for them the story of George Washington and the cherry tree.

True Stories That Didn't Happen

EVERY GRADE-SCHOOL KID IN the country knows the cherry tree story. As a young boy, George Washington, for unknown reasons, took a hatchet to his father's cherry tree. When his father came home, he saw the tree and asked, "Who chopped down my cherry tree?" Young George answered, "I cannot tell a lie. I did it." The way the story is normally told, we don't find out what happened afterwards—was young George taken out to the woodshed? The story ends with George's one-liner.[1]

We know that this story never happened, because the person who invented the tale later admitted to having done so. He was a Christian minister named Mason Locke Weems, usually known as Parson Weems. As a later biographer of Washington, Parson Weems confessed that he made up the story, even though he once had claimed that he received it from a credible eyewitness (a nice paradox: he "told a lie" in this story about not lying).

Here, then, is a story that we know is nonhistorical. But we still tell it to our children. Why? Not because we are trying to teach them about the facts of colonial history, but because we think the story conveys a "truth" that we want our children to learn. The truth claims of the story actually work on several levels. On one level the story is a good piece of political propaganda for the United States. Who was George Washington? He was the father of our nation. What kind of person was he? He

was an honest man, a man who would never tell a lie. Really? How honest was he? Well, one day when he was a kid…The conclusion is clear. This country is founded on honesty. This country is honest. This country cannot tell a lie. Or so the story goes.

But the story of George Washington and the cherry tree functions on another level as well, and this is probably why most parents are glad their kids learn it. This is a story about personal morality and responsibility. I told the story to my kids because I wanted them to be like young George. Even if they did something wrong, I wanted them to come clean and tell the truth about it. It is better to be truthful and face the consequences than to live a life of dishonesty. It is better not to tell a lie.

My point is that fiction, even historical fiction, can in some sense convey "truth" even if it is something that "didn't happen." Truth is more than simply correct information.

That does not mean, however, that there is no such thing as falsehood. Quite the contrary, there are plenty of kinds of falsehood: incorrect information, flat-out deception, stories that convey messages that we do *not* accept as "true" based on our understanding of the world.[2] If I were to read a story about the childhood of Joseph Stalin that stressed his inherently sweet disposition, his kind, gentle nature, and his deep concern for the well-being of others, I would say that the story is false.

Ancient people also had a more nuanced sense of truth and falsehood; they too had stories that they accepted as "true" in some sense without thinking that they actually happened.[3] Most scholars today recognize that the majority of educated people in ancient Greece and Rome did not literally believe that the myths about the gods had actually happened historically. They were stories intending to convey some kind of true understanding of the divine realm and humans' relationship to it. And ancients had their equivalents of modern fiction. It is true, as some scholars have emphasized, that modern notions of fiction are much

more sophisticated and nuanced than anything you can find in antiquity. But in addition to myths ancient people had epic poems, legends, and novels (sometimes called "romances"), which correspond in many ways to the forms of fictional narrative that we have today. People didn't tell and retell, read and recite these forms of fiction simply because they thought they were literally true, but for much the same reason that we read fiction today: for entertainment, to learn something, to help them understand themselves and their world better.

The notion of "fiction" is very interesting. If we read a book that claims to be an authorized biography of Ronald Reagan, we expect it to stick to the facts and not to convey historically incorrect information. But if we read a novel about a president of the United States in the 1980s—a book that touts itself as pure fiction—we may expect some kinds of historical verisimilitude (the president would not be shown surfing the Internet or checking his wall on Facebook), but we do not expect to be given actual historical facts about an actual historical person. Ancient equivalents to modern fiction worked the same way. Readers expected the narrative to make some kind of historical sense—that is, to be plausible—but they did not expect the story to match up to the facts of historical reality.

The difference between a modern biography and a modern novel, of course, is a matter of literary genre. Scholars have long and protracted debates over what the notion of "genre" actually means, but for our purposes I think a fairly rough and ready description will suffice. A genre is a "kind" of writing that fits certain expected forms. A short story is short, for example; a novel is longer. Both have characters and plot and other shared features that make them different from a haiku. A limerick poem has clever rhymes and a surprising punch line. Free verse has neither, but relies on the depth of the language to convey meaning. And so on. The characteristics of each type of genre represent a sort of

implied agreement between an author and readers. It is almost a contractual agreement in which the author provides what is expected for this kind of writing, and readers are not allowed to expect anything other than what typically happens in this kind of writing.

When it comes to fiction, in nearly all its forms, readers agree to suspend judgment on the historical accuracy of the details of the narrative, while expecting, nonetheless, that the account will be historically plausible.[4] The reason fiction works is that, for the sake of being entertained, readers are willing to make this tacit agreement with an author.

When it comes to biography or historical writing, however, readers do not make this agreement. In this case the author agrees to stick to the historical facts insofar as she can, and readers expect her to do so. Any breach of this contract is seen as a violation of the rules and is condemned.

In ancient historical writing the matter was a bit more complicated. In large part that was because in antiquity there simply weren't the research tools available that we have today: extensive access to reliable sources, copious written records, databases, data retrieval systems, the possibilities given us by mass media and electronic modes of communication. Ancient historians had to do their best to cobble together a plausible narrative of past events. It was very hard indeed to give an "accurate" account, though most historians tried. Nowhere was this more obviously a problem than in recording the actual words of someone who lived a long time ago. Some of the best histories from antiquity are chock full of speeches given by their main characters. But if the events took place decades or even centuries earlier, in an age before there were tape recorders, or even stenographers and same-day reporting, how was a historian to know what the character actually said? There was, in fact, no way to know.

For that reason, a superb historian such as the fifth-century BCE Thucydides explicitly states that he simply made up the speeches himself. What choice did ancient historians have? The best they could do was to invent a speech that seemed appropriate to the character of the speaker and the occasion and trust that it was a more or less close approximation of what was actually said. There was no way of showing whether the historian got it right. But educated readers realized that this is what the historians were doing, and so here again there was a kind of understood contract between author and readers; the author would come up with his best guess at what a speaker said and readers would accept it for what it was, a best guess.

Some scholars have thought that forgery was like that, a kind of fiction comparable to the invention of speeches in a history, in which the real author and the real readers agreed not to take seriously the false name attached to a writing. As I have shown, recent scholars who have actually studied the ancient discussions of forgery indicate that this view is not right at all. Forgeries were literary texts in which the author adopted a kind of fiction *without* the permission of readers. And readers, when they found out, did not appreciate it. Ancient people treated forged historical narratives, treatises, letters, and so on as "false writings" and "lies," not as some kind of harmless and innocent fiction. That is why the ancients were so interested in seeing whether books were "authentic children" of their named authors or "illegitimate" (*notha*), not really belonging to the person named as the author.

So too ancient people recognized the difference between fabricated fictional accounts and historical narratives. Some historians, such as Lucian of Samosata and Polybius, unlike Thucydides, were quite insistent that historical narratives should indicate only what actually happened. Historians should not make up stories or even the speeches delivered by the characters in their

histories. As Polybius, a second-century BCE Greek historian who wrote about Rome's rise to power, succinctly states it: the historian should "simply record what really happened and what really was said." For Polybius, the historian is different from the "tragic poet" (i.e., the author of fictional drama): "The tragic poet should thrill and charm his audience for the moment by the verisimilitude of the words he puts into his characters' mouths, but it is the task of the historian to instruct and convince for all time serious students by the truth of the facts and the speeches he narrates."[5]

The reason a historian such as Polybius had to argue this point so strenuously, of course, is that other historians did precisely what he opposed, inventing speeches and even narratives as they saw fit for their "historical" accounts. It is certainly true that people in general, not just professional historians, made up a lot of stories about historical figures. In Christian circles this can be seen for nearly every historical figure of importance we know of: Jesus, Paul, Peter, and other members of the apostolic band. In this chapter, since I'm interested in books that claim to be written by Peter, but in fact were forged in his name, let us begin by considering some of the stories invented about him, before looking at books falsely attributed to him.

Stories About Peter

WE HAVE A NUMBER of books from early Christianity that tell stories about Peter. These were almost entirely "made up" by one Christian storyteller or another. By my definitions these stories are not forgeries; they are not accounts that falsely claim to be written by Peter. They, instead, might be called "fabrications," stories invented *about* Peter.[6]

One of the most interesting does happen to occur in a forged document. This forgery, however, is not in the name of Peter, but in the name of Titus, the companion of Paul. The New Testament contains a letter allegedly by Paul to Titus, which I argue in Chapter 3 is pseudonymous (i.e., a forgery). About four hundred years later another letter appeared, this one claiming to be written *by* Titus. It is an intriguing letter, because it argues vociferously that the only way to have eternal life is by living an ascetic, chaste life. Or to put it more bluntly, one can have salvation only by refraining from sex. In the context of the forger's discussion he cites a story about Peter that serves to illustrate his point.

A peasant brings his virgin daughter to Peter to be blessed. Peter says a prayer over the girl, asking that God do what is best for her. She drops down dead. The peasant is understandably distressed, but the author of the story calls him "distrustful," since he doesn't believe that what has happened is in the girl's best interest. He begs Peter to restore the girl to life, and Peter does so. But a few days later a visitor who claims to be a Christian comes to stay with the peasant and seduces his daughter. They run off together and are never seen again. And that's the end of the story. In its context the message is quite clear: it is far better to be dead than caught up in sexual desire.

A similar narrative can be found in a collection of stories about Peter's missionary activities, probably written in the second Christian century. The account, simply called the *Acts of Peter,* describes the great miracles Peter performed after Jesus's resurrection and ascension, as he demonstrates the power of his risen Lord and converts innumerable persons to the faith.

In one of the stories Peter is talking to a gathering of Christians in his home on a Sunday; they have brought a group of sick people for him to heal. But someone in the crowd asks Peter why he won't heal his own daughter, who is lying paralyzed in the corner. Peter assures his guests that God has the power to heal

the girl, should he choose to do so. To prove his point, Peter orders the girl to arise and walk naturally. And she does so. But then he orders her to return to her corner paralyzed. The crowd is both amazed and distraught.

Peter then tells the story of his daughter. When she was young, Peter learned in a vision from God that if she remained healthy, she would lead many astray; she apparently was beautiful as a child, and as an adult she would entice men to sleep with her. When she was ten, a next-door neighbor attempted to seduce her, but before he could sleep with her, she became paralyzed, by the mercy of God. The neighbor went blind for his troubles, until healed by Peter and converted to faith in Christ. But the girl had to remain paralyzed, lest she lead others astray. Here again the point is perfectly clear: sex is dangerous and to be avoided at all costs, even if it means being an invalid for life.

The *Acts of Peter* is chiefly built around a series of contests between Peter, the representative of the true God, and a heretic named Simon, a magician empowered by the devil. Each of them can do miracles, and each tries to convince the crowds that he, not the other, stands for the truth. One of the miracles involves Peter and a smoked tuna. We are told that Peter has been trying to convince the crowds and is having little success. But he is standing by a fishmonger's shop and sees a smoked tuna hanging in the window. He asks the crowds if they will believe if he can make the dead fish come back to life. Yes, they reply, then they will believe. So he removes the tuna from the hook, throws it into a nearby pond, and orders it to come back from the dead. The fish comes to life—not for just a few minutes, but for real. The crowd rejoices and comes to believe.

Greater miracles are yet in store. Peter and Simon the Magician are called by the local Roman official into the arena to compete in order to see who is the true spokesperson for God. A slave boy is ordered into the arena. Simon is instructed to kill the boy,

and Peter to raise him from the dead. Simon speaks a word in the boy's ear, and he falls down dead (it is the heretic who speaks the word of death). But Peter tells the boy's master to take his hand and raise him up, and the boy is immediately restored to life (the man of God has the word of life).

A wealthy woman then comes up to Peter and cries out for him to help her as well. Her son has died, and she desperately wants Peter to raise him back to life. Peter challenges Simon to a duel to see who can raise the man. While the crowd looks on, Simon goes through several shenanigans: standing next to the dead body, he stoops down three times and stands up three times, and lo and behold, the dead man raises up his head. The crowds are convinced that Simon is the true power of God, and Peter must be an impostor. They prepare to burn him at the stake. But Peter shouts them down and points out that the man has not actually been raised from the dead; he has simply moved his head. If Simon is truly from God, he will be able to raise him up and make him talk. When Simon is unable to do so, Peter then has his chance. He speaks a word, raises the man fully from the dead, and has him speak. From that hour on, the people "venerated Peter as a god."

The climax of the story comes when the heretic Simon announces to the crowds that he will prove his superior power by flying like a bird over the hills and temples of Rome. When the day of his feat arrives, he is true to his word and takes off, flying like a bird. Peter, not to be outdone, calls out to God and deprives Simon of his power in mid-flight. He crashes to the ground and breaks his leg. The crowds converge on him and stone him to death as an impostor. It is Peter who has the true power of God.

Stories like this can easily be multiplied. In fact, they *were* multiplied as Christian storytellers fabricated legendary accounts of the great heroes of the faith in the second and third Christian centuries. So they made up stories *about* Peter. Did they also

make up writings *by* Peter? There seems to be no doubt about that either. Nor are there many doubts about why they invented such writings. In no small measure it is for the reason we have seen. Different Christians had competing assumptions, outlooks, practices, and theologies, all of which needed apostolic "authority" behind them. A writing in the name of Peter could authorize one set of views in the name of a great "authority," named as its "author."

Noncanonical Writings Forged in the Name of Peter

THE GOSPEL OF PETER

One of the most significant Gospels to be rediscovered in modern times is the so-called *Gospel of Peter*. I say that it has been rediscovered, because we actually knew of its existence for centuries, before it turned up in an archaeological dig near the end of the nineteenth century. Our earlier source of information was Eusebius. Eusebius is often called the "father of church history," since his ten-volume book, *The Church History,* was the first narrative account of the early Christian church. In this account Eusebius traces the spread of the Christian movement from the time of Jesus down to his own day, the early fourth century. Eusebius is an invaluable source of information for Christianity's first three hundred years. For many of his narratives, his *Church History* is the only source we have. It is true, as scholars have increasingly recognized, that Eusebius very much puts his own slant on his accounts, that he has personal views, theological perspectives, and hidden agendas that dictate how he tells his narrative. He often needs to be taken with a pound of salt. But he is especially valuable when he quotes verbatim from the earlier sources that were available to him. In those cases we get primary sources preserved for us from authors living before his time,

direct access to earlier Christian authors whose writings have otherwise been lost.

In Book 6 of his *Church History* Eusebius tells the story of an important bishop of the large church in Antioch, Syria, near the end of the second century, a man named Serapion. The story concerns a *Gospel of Peter,* and luckily this is one of those instances in which Eusebius actually quotes a primary source, a writing of Serapion himself.[7] As bishop of one of the largest communities in Christendom, Serapion had under his jurisdiction the churches in the villages and towns of the surrounding area, including the church in the town of Rhossus. Serapion indicates that while making the rounds of his churches, he visited Rhossus and found there was a division in the congregation. He attributed the division to petty squabbling and learned that it may have had its roots in the Gospel that was being used in the church. It was not Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John (Gospels that he doesn't mention), but a *Gospel of Peter*. Serapion's response was that Peter, of course, was a disciple of Jesus; any Gospel that he wrote must be perfectly acceptable. On these grounds he allowed the parishioners in Rhossus to continue using it.

But he did so without reading the book himself. When he returned to Antioch, he learned from several informers that the Gospel in fact was a problem—it contained heretical teachings. In particular, it was used by a group of Christians known as docetists. Docetists (from the Greek word *dokeo,* "to seem" or "to appear") maintained that since Christ was fully divine, he could not have been fully human and could not have really suffered (people suffer, God doesn't suffer). Why then did Christ "seem" to be human? For docetists, it was all an appearance. Christ didn't have a real flesh-and-blood body and didn't really suffer and die. He only seemed to do so.

Docetists maintained that Christ was not a real human being in two different ways. Some docetists claimed that Christ's body

only seemed to be human, because it was, in fact, phantasmal (like Casper the Friendly Ghost). The other docetic view is a bit more complicated. It maintained that there was a real man Jesus (flesh and blood like the rest of us), but there was also a different being known as the Christ. The Christ was a divine being who descended from heaven and came into Jesus at his baptism (the dove that descended on him and went into him), empowering him to perform miracles and deliver his divine teachings. Then, before Jesus died, the Christ left him to return to its heavenly home. So some people might have mistakenly thought that the Christ was a human who really died; but that was only Jesus. The Christ was divine and could not suffer.

When Serapion received word that the Gospel he had previously approved might contain docetic teachings, he was naturally disturbed, and so he procured a copy to read. Sure enough, he came to think that even though most of the account was perfectly "orthodox" (a "right teaching"), some parts were not. Serapion decided that the book was forged, and he wrote a letter to the Christians of Rhossus disallowing its use. In a kind of appendix he gave a list of the offensive passages.

Eusebius quotes from the letter in his *Church History,* but unfortunately he does not include the appendix with the portions that Serapion found objectionable. That is very much to be regretted, for a *Gospel of Peter* has been discovered in modern times, and without knowing what Serapion's book said, it is difficult to know if what we now have is the same book he had.

The modern discovery occurred in 1886 or 1887, during an archaeological dig near the city of Akhmim in Upper Egypt. To the northeast of this city are three cemeteries, and during the winter months of 1886–87 a French archaeological team working out of Cairo was digging in the tombs. They uncovered the tomb of a person they took to be a monk, because he was buried with a sacred book (modern scholars are less sure that he was a monk;

almost anyone could have been buried with an important book). The book itself was highly significant. It is sixty-six pages in length, written in Greek on vellum (pages made out of animal skin), and it contains a small anthology of four texts. The first of these, occupying the first ten pages, is a Gospel that was previously unknown.[8]

The Gospel is not a complete text, with beginning, middle, and end. It starts in the middle of a story, "…but none of the Jews washed his hands, nor did Herod or any of his judges. Since they did not wish to wash, Pilate stood up." What follows is an alternative account of the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus—alternative in that the story differs in remarkable ways from the accounts in the New Testament Gospels. One key difference can be seen already in this opening verse. In the New Testament, it is only in the Gospel of Matthew that we have a story of Pilate washing his hands at Jesus's trial, declaring himself "innocent of this man's blood" (27:24). Matthew says nothing about anyone else washing or refusing to wash his hands. But that is stressed here. And who does not wash their hands? "The Jews," Herod (the Jewish king), and his (Jewish) judges.

This Gospel maintains even more emphatically than the Gospels of the New Testament that the blame for Jesus's death falls squarely upon the Jewish people and their leaders. This anti-Jewish emphasis is part of a trend we can see developing throughout the early Christian tradition. With the passing of time, the fact that the Romans killed Jesus retreats into the background, and the Jewish leaders and Jewish people are made increasingly culpable. That can be seen simply by looking chronologically at the Gospels of the New Testament.

Our earliest Gospel, Mark, seems to suggest that the decision to have Jesus killed is shared by the Jewish leaders and the Roman governor Pilate (although even here Pilate's hand seems to be forced). When we come to the Gospel of Luke, written later,

Pilate actually declares Jesus innocent three times—so that the fault for his death falls on the Jewish leaders who demand it. The Gospel of Matthew, written at about the same time as Luke, has Pilate wash his hands to declare that he is innocent in the shedding of Jesus's blood. Somewhat notoriously the Jewish people (this is only in Matthew) cry out, "His blood be upon us and our children" (27:25). In other words, for Matthew, the Jewish people are willing to accept the responsibility and consequences of Jesus's death and to pass the responsibility on to their descendants. This verse, of course, came to be used for horrible acts of Christian anti-Semitism down through the Middle Ages, and even today.

The Gospel of John, the last of our canonical Gospels, goes a step farther. Here we are told that the Jewish people rejected Jesus as their king and declared that "we have no king but Caesar" (even though God himself was to be the king over his people). And then John says that Pilate "handed Jesus over to them to be crucified" (19:16). In this distortion of historical reality, it is the Jews themselves who actually kill Jesus.

And so, as time goes on, within the Christian tradition Pilate becomes increasingly innocent in the death of Jesus, and the Jewish people and their leaders become increasingly guilty. The *Gospel of Peter* is even later than John, and here Jewish responsibility is heightened further. Now it is not even the Roman governor Pilate who orders Jesus crucified; it is the Jewish king Herod: "Then King Herod ordered the Lord to be taken away and said to them, 'Do everything that I ordered you to do to him'" (v. 2).

In other verses of this account the Jewish mistreatment of Jesus is intensified. The Jewish authorities crucify Jesus and take him off the cross. The author is quite clear that they are the ones who are at fault: "They brought all things to fulfillment and completed all their sins on their heads" (v. 17). More significant still,

the Jewish people realize that what they have done is wrong and that they will be punished for it: "Then the Jews, the elders, and the priests realized how much evil they had done to themselves and began beating their breasts, saying, 'Woe to us because of our sins. The judgment and the end of Jerusalem are near'" (v. 25). This is a reference to the view, found among Christians in the second century and later, that when the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem in 70 CE after a Jewish uprising, it was not for political or military reasons, but religious ones. Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jewish Temple burned to the ground as divine retribution against the Jews for their sinful act of killing God's messiah. Here in the *Gospel of Peter* the Jewish people themselves recognize their guilt and their imminent punishment.

In addition to the anti-Jewish character of this account, there are a number of other interesting legendary features. In the Gospels of the New Testament Jesus is crucified with two others, as happens here. But in this Gospel there is a curious incident. When those who crucify Jesus gamble for his clothes, one of the "evildoers" being crucified with him maligns them: "We have suffered like this for the evil things we did; but this one, the Savior of the people, what wrong has he done you?" The soldiers get angry at the man and order "his legs not be broken, so that he would die in torment" (vv. 14–15).[9] The idea is that a crucified man would die more quickly if he could not push up with his legs to relieve the pressure on his lungs and breathe. By *not* breaking the criminal's legs they prolong his torment.

One of the big questions of this Gospel is whether Jesus himself experiences any torment. In v. 11 we are told that Jesus was "silent, as if he had no pain." Is it possible that this is one of the verses that Serapion found potentially objectionable? That Jesus appeared not to have pain, because in fact he did not have any pain? That his body was a phantasm?

A later verse is equally puzzling. When Jesus is about to die, rather than crying out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" as, say, in the Gospel of Mark (15:34), he instead cries, "My power, O power, you have left me behind!" And then we are told, "When he said this, he was taken up." Doesn't this sound like the other kind of docetism, the kind where the divine Christ leaves the human Jesus to die alone?[10]

The most striking passage of the Gospel comes at the very end, a passage that provides us with something we never find in the New Testament Gospels: an actual account of the resurrection. As I pointed out in Chapter 1, the canonical Gospels do not narrate the resurrection of Jesus. In their stories, Jesus is crucified, dies, and is buried, and on the third day the women go to the tomb and find it empty. But there is no story in the Gospels of the New Testament about Jesus coming out of the tomb alive. The *Gospel of Peter,* however, does have such a story.

As happens in the Gospel of Matthew, but in none of the other canonical Gospels, a guard is posted at the tomb of Jesus to make sure that no one comes to steal the body. But unlike in Matthew, in the *Gospel of Peter* a very peculiar sequence of events occurs while the guards are looking on. The heavens open up and two "men" descend, while the stone in front of the tomb rolls aside. The two heavenly men enter the tomb.

Terrified, the soldiers go off to wake the centurion to tell him what has happened. But while they are talking, they look up and see three figures emerge from the tomb. Two of them are so tall that their heads reach up to the sky. The one they are supporting—Jesus obviously—is taller still; his head reaches above the sky. And then, behind them, the cross itself emerges from the tomb. And a voice comes from heaven asking, "Have you preached to those who are asleep?" And the cross replies, "Yes." So, at the resurrection, we have a giant Jesus and a walking, talking cross.

The narrative is meant, of course, to be highly symbolic. Divine beings are often portrayed as gigantic in ancient texts. Jesus is the tallest since he is the most divine. And the cross is said to have proclaimed its message, the news of the salvation brought to those who are "asleep," that is, to those who are already dead and waiting for the salvation to come.

The Gospel continues by indicating that the Jewish authorities go to Pilate and urge him to cover up the story by ordering the soldiers not to breathe a word of what they have seen. Then comes an account of the women going to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, only to learn that he has been raised. The disciples are still grieving over what has happened, not knowing yet about the resurrection. Then we have the concluding sentences of the Gospel: "But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and grieved; and each one returned to his home, grieving for what had happened. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went off to the sea. And with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord…(vv. 59–60). And there it ends, right in the middle of a sentence.

The reason the account seems to start in the middle of a thought and definitely ends in the middle of a sentence is that the person who created this book of sixty-six pages—probably in the sixth century—had only a fragmentary account in front of him. It is impossible to say whether the complete *Gospel of Peter* included stories of Jesus's birth, life, ministry, teachings, miracles, and so on before the account of his Passion and resurrection. What is clear, from the final verse, is that this Gospel, unlike the Gospels of the New Testament, is written in the first person. The author claims to be Peter. But there is no way he was Peter. This is an author claiming to be someone he is not. This is a forgery.

The reason Simon Peter could not have written this account is that it almost certainly dates to the second century, at least sixty years after Peter had died. Virtually all scholars agree on this, for

compelling reasons. For one thing, the heightened anti-Judaism fits better with the second century, when it became common, for example, for Christians to blame the destruction of Jerusalem on the Jews themselves for killing Jesus. Moreover, there are the highly legendary aspects of the story, such as the robber whose legs were not broken, the giant Jesus, and the talking cross. These too suggest it is a later account. Scholars debate whether the author of this Gospel had access to the stories of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; there are numerous parallels with one or the other of the Gospels throughout. If he did use them, then he was obviously writing after them, that is, no sooner than the beginning of the second century.

Scholars also debate whether this is the *Gospel of Peter* that was known to Serapion. In part the debate has been over whether this is really a docetic account, as the Gospel described by Serapion evidently was, at least in his eyes. Some scholars have their doubts. When it says that Jesus was silent on the cross "as if" he felt no pain, that isn't really the same thing, it is often argued, as saying that he did *not* feel pain. And to say that "he was taken up" may not mean that the Christ had left Jesus. Jesus still has a miraculous body and divine power at the resurrection, for example. So the phrase about being taken up may simply be a euphemism for "he died."

My own view is that the Gospel would not need to be actually docetic in order to be the Gospel mentioned by Serapion. Serapion admitted that most of the Gospel was perfectly orthodox, but he found some "additions" that were troubling and that could be used by docetic Christians. And certainly this Gospel fits that bill. It is by and large perfectly acceptable from an orthodox perspective, but several verses might easily lend themselves to a docetic reading. This would include the major account of Jesus emerging from the tomb, where he looks as if he has anything *but* a real body that has just suffered the agonies of crucifixion!

Whether or not this is Serapion's Gospel, it is certainly *a Gospel of Peter*. It claims its authority in the name of Jesus's closest disciple, in part, no doubt, to make its incredible and anti-Jewish narratives seem completely credible. But Peter didn't write it. This is a forgery in the name of Peter. And it's not the only one.[11]

THE EPISTLE OF PETER

Many scholars have thought of the early Christian church as seriously divided. On one side were the Jewish followers of Jesus, such as his brother James, who was the head of the church in Jerusalem, and the disciple Peter. On the other side were people like the apostle Paul, who focused on converting Gentiles (non-Jews). In this modern schema, James and Peter are often thought to have been more "true" to Jesus's original message, that it was the God of Israel who had brought salvation to those who kept his teachings, as found in the Jewish law. For these early Christians, Jesus was the Jewish messiah sent from the Jewish God to the Jewish people in fulfillment of the Jewish law. Naturally, to be a follower of this Jewish savior, a person had to be Jewish. Gentiles were, of course, welcomed into the community with open arms, but only if they converted to Judaism. For men that meant getting circumcised, and for both men and women it meant observing the Sabbath, keeping kosher, and following the other Jewish laws.

Paul, in this understanding, taught something quite different, that believing in the death and resurrection of Christ was the only way to have a right standing before God. Moreover, this salvation applied equally to Jews and Gentiles, so that one did not have to be a Jew to be a follower of Jesus. For Paul, according to this view, the law had passed away; Jews could keep it if they chose (and as a Jew he himself kept it), but Gentiles were not

supposed to keep it. This was the national law for Israel, and it had nothing to do with salvation. Only Jesus's death and resurrection could bring salvation. Through Paul, then, the church largely filled up with Gentiles who did not see themselves as Jewish and who worshiped the God of Israel without following his law.

It is not necessary here for me to evaluate this common understanding of the relationship of Paul to the apostles before him, particularly James and Peter. But I do want to say that this idea that there was a split between their views is not just a modern notion. It goes way back to earliest Christianity. Historically speaking, it is true that Paul established churches made up of Gentiles and that he insisted that these converts not keep the Jewish law. This is a case he makes quite strenuously, for example, in the (orthonymous) letter to the Galatians. For Paul, any Gentile who tried to keep the law completely misunderstood that salvation comes from Christ's death alone, to be received by faith. Keeping the law was worse than irrelevant; it was an admission that Christ's death was insufficient for salvation (see 2:15–16, 21).

Other Christians did indeed disagree. Many of them were Paul's opponents in his various churches. Later, in the second Christian century, there continued to be groups of Jewish Christians who insisted that the law certainly had to be followed by anyone who wanted to belong to God's people. God had given the law, and he never changed his mind. This was the law that told people how to live, it was the law that Jesus himself taught and fulfilled, and it was the law that was to be followed, *especially* by followers of Christ.

This split in the early church between the (now) minority of Jewish Christians and the dominant majority of Gentiles can be seen nowhere more clearly than in a writing forged in Peter's name called the *Epistula Petri,* or the *Epistle of Peter*.[12] This

book is not to be confused with 1 Peter or 2 Peter in the New Testament. It was written later, years after the New Testament writings had been completed.

The *Epistle of Peter* is found as a kind of introduction to group of writings that scholars call the *Pseudo-Clementines*. As implied by its scholarly name, this group of writings falsely claims (hence "Pseudo") to be written by Clement, who, as we saw earlier, was widely thought to have been the fourth bishop of Rome (or pope), appointed to his position by none other than Peter. The *Pseudo-Clementines* have a highly complicated literary history. For over a century scholars have strenuously debated what sources the books used, how the various writings are related to each other, and other technical questions. But the basic character of the writings is clear. These are accounts of the travels and adventures of Clement, especially as he converts to Christianity through Peter's preaching and then journeys with Peter as the apostle spreads the gospel, gives speeches, and performs miracles. These include miracle contests with the arch-heretic Simon the Magician, whom we saw earlier. The *Acts of Peter* may have been one of the sources for these stories.

The Clementine books clearly were not written by the historical Clement, but long after his death, even though they are (allegedly) narrated by him in the first person. They are, therefore, forged. In one set of these writings the adventures of Clement are prefaced by the *Epistle of Peter,* a letter supposedly written by Peter to the brother of Jesus, James, head of the church in Jerusalem. The letter instructs James not to allow Peter's writings to be handed over to just anyone, because they might be misinterpreted or altered, but only to a select group of trustworthy people. The author, "Peter," attacks Christians who interpret his message as saying that the Jewish law is no longer in force. That is completely false, says the author, for Jesus himself had indicated that "not one jot or tittle will pass away from the law" and

that it would be eternally valid (see Matt. 5:17–20). According to this letter, one of Peter's opponents in particular has led "the Gentiles" to reject Peter's "lawful preaching" and, instead, to prefer "a lawless and absurd doctrine of the man who is my enemy."

It does not take a lot of thought to realize who the enemy is whom "Peter" is opposing. It is someone who preaches to the Gentiles, insists on a gospel apart from the Jewish law (a "lawless doctrine"), and claims that Peter himself subscribes to that view (see Gal. 2). Without naming him, this author is talking about Paul.

Here we have a view of Peter and Paul very much at odds with what we find in some of the writings of the New Testament.[13] In the history of the early church found in the book of Acts, for example, Peter and Paul see eye to eye, they agree on every major point, they stand arm in arm in the mission to spread the gospel, and most important, they wholeheartedly concur that Gentiles do not need to be Jews to be followers of Jesus (see Acts 10–11; 15). This is not the case, however, for the author of the *Epistle of Peter*. Here there is a clear split between Peter, Jesus's closest disciple, and Paul, an interloper who has misinterpreted Peter. Paul has misrepresented the gospel.

This, then, is an author who saw Paul as the enemy and his "lawless and absurd" doctrine as heresy. For this author, Paul not only disagreed with Peter; he was wrong. And on what authority does the author claim this? On the authority of Peter himself. The author forged the letter in Peter's name in order to make his point.

The Apocalypse of Peter

I will not be talking at length in this book about how we got our twenty-seven books of the New Testament, that is, how the

canon was formed and how some writings came to be included and others left out. Plenty of other books describe this process at length.[14] I can say, though, that there were some writings that were a "close call," that nearly made it in but did not, just as there were others that nearly were left out, but finally made it in. One of the books that nearly made it in is called the *Apocalypse of Peter*.[15]

From authors such as Eusebius, we know that there were Christian communities as late as the fourth century who thought that the *Apocalypse of Peter* should be included in the canon, either in place of the Apocalypse of John (i.e., the book of Revelation), which obviously ended up being included, or alongside it.[16] The *Apocalypse of Peter* is very different from the Apocalypse of John, however. Both books are apocalypses, in which an author is given a secret revelation about the divine, heavenly mysteries that can make sense of the mundane, earthly realities. In the New Testament Apocalypse of John, these mysteries have to do with the future course of history to be unfurled on earth, as has been decided already in heaven. In the noncanonical *Apocalypse of Peter,* these mysteries have to do with the fate of souls in life after death. This book describes a personal tour that Peter is given of the realms of the blessed and of the damned.

Most readers are familiar with the idea of a tour of heaven and hell from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Dante did not invent the idea, however. He stood in a long line of Christian authors who used the motif of a tour of the afterlife in order to make whatever important points they wanted to stress about life here on earth. Our earliest example of this kind of writing is the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

Here again we knew about the book for centuries before it was available. As it turns out, it was another of the four texts found in the sixty-six-page book uncovered by archaeologists near

Akhmim, Egypt, in 1886–87. Since then an Ethiopic version has been found, which gives an even fuller account.

The narrative begins with Peter and the disciples talking with Jesus on the Mount of Olives (see Mark 13). They ask Jesus about what will happen when the world comes to an end, and he provides them with a brief account. But then the discussion shifts to a description, given in some graphic detail, of what happens to souls after they die, either in the place of torment or the place of eternal bliss. As sometimes happens in these personal tours of heaven and hell, the description of the realms of the blessed is a bit stereotyped and brief. There are, after all, only so many ways you can describe eternal, ecstatic joy. It's *fantastic*! What more can one say? The realms of the damned, however, are a different matter altogether. Anyone with any creativity and imagination can invent lurid and detailed descriptions of the torments of sinners.

In Peter's vision, a number of the damned are tortured in ways that befit their characteristic sins, so that the punishment fits the crime. Those who have blasphemed against the ways of God, for example—that is, sinned by what they've said—are hanged by their tongues over eternal flames. Women who have braided their hair in order to make themselves attractive to men so as to seduce them are hanged by their hair over eternal flames. The men they seduced are hanged by a *different* body part over the flames. In this case, the men cry out, as you might imagine, "We didn't know it would come to *this*!"

The overarching message of this book is quite clear and not altogether subtle: if you want to enjoy the amazing blessings of paradise and avoid the horrific torments of hell, don't sin! This message conveys a reliable and incontrovertible truth: those who fail to follow God's will face eternal torture. How do we know? Because someone who has observed the realms of the damned has told us, Jesus's right-hand man, Peter himself. In order to get

his point across, the author writes in the first person—not in his own name, but in the name of the chief disciple. Here again we have a forgery in the name of Peter.

"Petrine" Writings in the New Testament

THE BOOKS I HAVE talked about here at some length—the *Acts of Peter,* the *Gospel of Peter,* the *Pseudo-Clementine Writings,* the *Epistle of Peter,* the *Apocalypse of Peter*—are not the only fabrications *about* Peter and forgeries allegedly written *by* Peter from the early church. There were others: other "Acts" of Peter, a collection called the "Preaching" of Peter, two other apocalypses of Peter. And these are just the ones that we still have today. No one knows how many once existed. Producing books in the name of Peter was a virtual cottage industry in the early church.

Is it possible, in light of this extensive use of Peter's name to authorize others' views, that any forgeries in the name of Peter made it into the New Testament? As it turns out, two books bear Peter's name there as well, the letters of 1 Peter and 2 Peter. Both claim to be written by Peter, but there are solid reasons for thinking that Peter did not write either one.

1 Peter

The book of 1 Peter is allegedly written by "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ," to Christians whom he calls "exiles" in five provinces in the western part of what is now Turkey.[17] There is no doubt that the author is claiming to be Jesus's closest disciple, Peter. "Peter" was not a personal name before Peter was given it as a nickname by Jesus himself. According to the Gospels, this disciple's real name was Simon. But Jesus indicated that he

would be the "rock" (Greek *petros*) on whom the church would be founded. So he called him "Rocky," or "Peter" (see Matt. 16:13–18).[18] So far as we know, there were no other persons named Peter until later times when Christians started naming their children after the great apostle. So the author of 1 Peter is certainly claiming to be "that" Peter. This is borne out by his comment in 5:1, that he was personally a "witness of the sufferings of Christ."[19]

This matter of suffering is the key theme of the book. In fact, the word "suffering" occurs more often in this short five-chapter letter than in any other book of the entire New Testament, including the Gospels, which are much, much longer. The author assumes that his readers themselves are undergoing persecution and that they will be experiencing yet more in the future. "Now for a little while," he tells them, they "have had to suffer various trials." But that is all to the good, because through being "tested" their faith will be refined and become "more precious than gold that is…tested by fire" (1:6–7). They should not therefore be "surprised at the fiery ordeal that is coming…, as if something strange were happening," but they are to "rejoice," because they "share in the sufferings of Christ" (4:12–13).

Scholars have long debated what kind of suffering the author has in mind. The older view was that the author was dealing with official state persecutions, such as happened when the emperor Nero imprisoned and then executed Christians in the city of Rome in 64 CE, blaming them for starting the horrible fire that destroyed much of the city, a fire that his own arsonists may have set. But over the past twenty years or so scholars have begun to stress that the book of 1 Peter never says much about "official" persecution, where Christians are arrested, put on trial for their faith, and martyred. Instead, the opposition seems to come from former friends and neighbors who do not understand or appreciate the Christians' new lifestyle, which is removed from the joyful

celebrations of pagan religions (4:1–5). That is to say, Christians stopped attending pagan festivals to form their own secret societies, and pagans became upset, suspicious, and hateful, leading to local opposition to Christians that could at times turn nasty.

If this is the case, it makes sense that the author stresses to his readers that it is important for them to be obedient to the government and governing officials (2:13–15), to show good conduct among outsiders (2:12), to be devoted slaves, wives, and husbands (2:18–3:7), to do nothing to warrant any opposition, but to suffer only for doing what is right (2:20). A good deal of the exhortation and encouragement to his readers is based on a sophisticated interpretation of key passages in the Old Testament, quoted, of course, in Greek, the so-called Septuagint (the legendary origins of which are described in the forged *Letter of Aristeas* discussed in Chapter 1), as can be seen, for example, in 1:24–25; 2:3, 6–9, 22, 24–25; 3:10–12.

The author ends his exhortation to be steadfast in the face of adversity by indicating that he has written his letter "through Silvanus, a faithful brother" (i.e., a true Christian) and by sending greetings from "she who is in Babylon, who is also chosen" (5:13). Scholars have long realized what this last bit means. Babylon was the city that was seen as the ultimate enemy of God among Jews, since it was Babylon that had defeated Judah and destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple in the sixth century BCE. By the end of the first century, Christians and Jews had started using the word "Babylon" as a code word for the city that was the enemy of God in their own day, the city of Rome, which also destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, in the year 70 (see, e.g., Rev. 14:8; 17:5). The author, then, is claiming to be writing from the city of Rome. This makes sense, given the later traditions that associated Peter with the city of Rome, in fact as its first bishop—the first pope.

But tradition also indicates that Peter was martyred in Rome under Nero in 64 CE. Would it make sense that he would be

calling Rome "Babylon" before the Romans had destroyed Jerusalem in the year 70? By the time that catastrophe hit, Peter was long dead. As it turns out there are other, very good grounds for thinking that Peter did not actually write this book. It was written by someone *claiming* to be Peter. Before explaining some of those grounds, we should first look at the second letter in the New Testament written in Peter's name.

2 Peter

There is less debate among scholars of the New Testament about the authorship of 2 Peter than for any of the other books sometimes considered forgeries. Whoever wrote 2 Peter, it was not Simon Peter.[20] The author certainly *claims* to be Peter, even more explicitly than in the case of 1 Peter. He introduces himself as "Simeon Peter,[21] a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ." But more than that, he claims personally to have been present at the "transfiguration" scene narrated in the Gospels, where Jesus was transformed before the eyes of his disciples Peter, James, and John and began speaking with Moses and Elijah, before a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (see Matt. 17:1–8). The author insists that he himself was there to hear these words, brought to him by the "voice…of the majestic glory" (1:17). The author wants there to be no doubt: he is Peter.

His chief concern is that there are false teachers in the community who have twisted the true message of the gospel. Most of chapter 2 is devoted to maligning these persons, without ever explaining what, exactly, they teach. This highly vituperative attack calls their teachings "destructive heresies" and says that they, the opponents, are licentious, greedy, and exploitative. The author indicates that they will suffer like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and like the inhabitants of the entire world in the days of

Noah. That is to say, they too will be destroyed. He calls them ignorant and says they are "blots and blemishes, reveling in their dissipation, carousing." He says they have eyes that are "full of adultery, unslakable for sin." And on and on.

This assault on his opponents, the "false prophets," contains numerous verbal similarities to what can be found in the New Testament book of Jude. The parallels are so numerous that scholars are virtually unified in thinking that the author has taken Jude's message and simply edited it a bit to incorporate it into his book.

In addition to the false teachers, "scoffers" have appeared who mock the Christian view that Jesus is soon to return from heaven in judgment on the earth. If he was supposed to come soon, say these skeptics, why hasn't he come? A lot of time has passed, and everything goes on just the same as before! The author replies that these unbelievers are ignorant and deceived, having forgotten that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as one day" (3:8). In other words, even if Jesus waits another three thousand years, he still is coming "soon." Jesus has in fact delayed returning simply to give people a chance to repent before the coming destruction. Paul himself, the author tells us, taught such things in "all his letters, which the ignorant and unstable people twist, as they do with all the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (3:16).

One of the reasons virtually all scholars agree that Peter did not actually write this letter is that the situation being presupposed appears to be of much later times. When Peter himself died—say, the year 64 under Nero—there was still eager expectation that Jesus would return soon; not even a full generation had passed since the crucifixion. It was only with the passing of time that the Christian claim that all would take place "within this generation" (Mark 13:30) and before the disciples had "tasted death" (9:1) started to ring hollow. By the time 2 Peter was

written, Christians were having to defend themselves in the face of opponents who mocked their view that the end was supposed to be imminent. So "Peter" has to explain that even if the end is thousands of years off, it is still right around the corner by God's calendar; everything is still on schedule.

Moreover, the author of 2 Peter is writing at a time when there was already a collection of Paul's letters in circulation, and these letters were being considered on a par with the Old Testament "Scriptures" (3:16). This could not have been during Paul's lifetime,[22] and early church tradition indicates that both Peter and Paul were killed during the reign of Nero.

These are among the reasons for thinking that 2 Peter almost certainly could not have been written by Peter.[23] And there is one more compelling reason. There are excellent grounds for thinking that Peter could not write.

Simon Peter, Ancient Palestine, and Literacy

WHAT DO WE KNOW about literacy and the ability to write in the ancient world, especially in rural Palestine, where Simon Peter was born and raised? Scholars of antiquity have been diligent over the past twenty-five years or so in trying to understand every aspect of ancient literacy and education. In what is now the classic study, the 1989 book *Ancient Literacy,* William Harris, professor of ancient history at Columbia University, shows that modern assumptions about literacy simply are not applicable to ancient times.[24] Today, in modern America, we live in a world where nearly every child goes to school and learns to read and write. Just about everyone we know can read the sports page and copy out a page of a novel if they choose. But the phenomenon of massive and widespread literacy is completely modern. Before the industrial revolution, societies had no compelling reasons to

invest enormous amounts of money and other resources into creating a literate population. It was only with the development of the industrial world that such a thing became both desirable and feasible.

Harris argues that in the ancient world, at the very best of times, only about 10 percent of the population was reasonably literate. By the "best of times" he means Athens, a center of learning, at the height of its intellectual power, during the days of Socrates and Plato (fifth–fourth century BCE). Most of these 10 percent were men, as might be expected in a highly patriarchal society. And all of them were in the upper classes, the social and economic elite, who had the leisure and the money (well, their parents had the money) to afford an education. Lower-class people did not learn how to read, let alone write. And the vast majority of people in the ancient world were in the lower classes (to the surprise of many, the "middle class" is another invention of the industrial revolution; in the ancient world virtually everyone was high or low, or very, very low). The only notable exceptions were slaves, who were naturally a very low class indeed, but who were sometimes educated at their masters' expense, so that they could carry out household duties that required literacy skills, such as taking care of the household finances, helping with correspondence, or teaching the children.

When I say that few people could read, "let alone write," I mean to signal something else quite significant about the ancient world. When upper-class people were educated, reading and writing were taught as two different skills.[25] Today we learn reading and writing together, and we naturally assume that if people can read, they can also write—not necessarily write a novel, but at least a letter. But that's because of the way we have set up our educational system. There is nothing inherent in learning to read that can necessarily teach you how to write. I know this full well personally. I can read Greek, Hebrew, French, German,

and a range of other languages, but I cannot compose a letter in any of these languages. I learned how to read all of them in graduate school, so I could read ancient documents in their original languages and modern scholarship in the languages of Europe. But I never learned how to write them.

Most people in the ancient world could not read. And those who could read often could not write. And in this case by "write" I mean that most people—even if they could copy down words—could not compose a sentence, let alone a well-argued treatise. On the contrary, the people who could compose an ethical essay, a learned philosophical discussion, or an involved religious treatise were highly educated and highly exceptional. And that was in the very best of times. Very, very few people indeed were able to perform these skills in a language other than the one they were raised with. I'm not saying that just 1 percent of the population could do such a thing. I'm saying that far fewer than 1 percent of the population could do it.

It is sometimes thought that Palestine was an exception, that in Palestine Jewish boys all learned to read so that they could study the Hebrew Scriptures, and that since they could read, they could probably write. Moreover, it is often argued that in Palestine most adults were bilingual or even trilingual, able to read Hebrew, speak the local language, Aramaic, and communicate well in the language of the broader empire, Greek. Recent studies of literacy in Palestine, however, have shown convincingly that none of these assertions is true.

The fullest, most thoroughly researched, and most widely influential study of literacy in Palestine during the period of the Roman Empire is by Catherine Hezser.[26] After examining all of the evidence, Hezser concludes that in Roman Palestine the best guestimate is that something like 3 percent of the population could read, and that the majority of these would have been in the cities and larger towns. Most people outside of the urban areas

would scarcely ever even see a written text. Some smaller towns and villages may have had a literacy level of around 1 percent. Moreover, these literate people were almost always the elite of the upper classes. Those who learned to read learned how to read Hebrew (not Greek).

And what is more, once again, far more people could read than could write. The people who knew how to write were primarily men who were priests. In fact, for the entire first century CE (the time of Jesus and Simon Peter), we know for certain of only two authors in Palestine who produced literary works (i.e., educated compositions other than tax documents, land deeds, or marriage certificates, etc.): the Jewish historian Josephus and a man named Justus of Tiberius. We still have Josephus's writings, but Justus's don't survive. Both of these men were in the upper echelons of society, and both were inordinately well educated. We know of no other literary authors for the entire century. Was Peter in Josephus's and Justus's class? No, not even close.

What about Greek education in the land of Peter's birth and up-bringing? It is sometimes assumed that since Galilee, the northern part of what we think of as Israel, was occasionally called "Galilee of the Gentiles," it was overrun by Gentiles in Jesus and Peter's day. And according to a common kind of logic, if there were lots of Gentiles in Galilee, they would have spoken Greek; so to get along, everyone must have spoken Greek. As it turns out, that's not true either.

The most recent thorough studies of Gentiles in Galilee have been undertaken by the American scholar Mark Chancey.[27] Chancey has studied every archaeological find from Galilee from around the time of the first century, has read every single piece of writing from the period of any relevance, and draws a decisive conclusion: the Gentiles in Galilee were almost exclusively located in the two major cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias. All the rest

of Galilee was predominantly Jewish. And since most of Galilee was rural, not urban, the vast majority of Jews had no encounters with Gentiles. Moreover, Greek was not widely, let alone normally, spoken. The vast majority of Jews spoke Aramaic and had no facility in Greek.

How do all these findings affect our question of whether Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter or any other books? Was Peter among the very upper echelons of the educated elite of Palestine who could compose letter-essays in Greek? Apart from the legendary accounts I have mentioned, all we know about Peter's life comes to us from the New Testament. What we principally learn about him is that before he was a follower of Jesus he was a fisherman from Capernaum in Galilee.

In order to evaluate Peter's linguistic abilities, the place to begin, then, is with Capernaum. A full summary of what we know about Capernaum from Peter's day is provided by an American archaeologist of Palestine, Jonathan Reed.[28] On the basis of archaeological digs and historical sources, it is clear that Capernaum was a historically insignificant village in rural Galilee. It is never mentioned in any ancient source prior to the Gospels. It is scarcely mentioned by any sources after that. It was discovered by archaeologists in the nineteenth century and has been excavated since then. In the time of Jesus it may have had anywhere between six and fifteen hundred inhabitants, so say a thousand.

The archaeological digs have revealed no evidence of any public buildings whatsoever, such as shops or storage facilities.[29] The market for buying food and other necessities must have been held in tents or booths in open unpaved public areas. The town is on none of the major international trade routes. The Roman roads in the area date from a hundred years after Peter's life. There is no trace of any pagan or Gentile population in the town. There are no inscriptions of any kind on any of the buildings. Reed concludes that the inhabitants were almost certainly

"predominantly illiterate." Archaeologists have found no building structures or materials associated with social elites from the first century (e.g., plaster surfaces, decorative frescoes, marble, mosaics, red ceramic roof tiles). The houses were roughly constructed out of stone basalt, and mud or clay was used to fill in the gaps; they probably had thatched roofs.

In short, Peter's town was a backwoods Jewish village made up of hand-to-mouth laborers who did not have an education. Everyone spoke Aramaic. Nothing suggests that anyone could speak Greek. Nothing suggests that anyone in town could write. As a lower-class fisherman, Peter would have started work as a young boy and never attended school. There was, in fact, probably no school there; if there was a school, he probably didn't attend; if he did attend, it would have been in order to receive rudimentary training in how to read Hebrew. But that almost certainly never happened. Peter was an illiterate peasant.

This should come as no surprise, really. As it turns out, there is New Testament evidence about Peter's education level. According to Acts 4:13, both Peter and his companion John, also a fisherman, were *agrammatoi,* a Greek word that literally means "unlettered," that is, "illiterate."

And so, is it possible that Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter? We have seen good reasons for believing he did not write 2 Peter, and some reason for thinking he didn't write 1 Peter. But it is highly probable that in fact he could not write at all. I should point out that the book of 1 Peter is written by a highly literate, highly educated, Greek-speaking Christian who is intimately familiar with the Jewish Scriptures in their Greek translation, the Septuagint. This is not Peter.

It is theoretically possible, of course, that Peter decided to go to school after Jesus's resurrection. In this imaginative (not to say imaginary) scenario, he learned his alphabet, learned how to sound out syllables and then words, learned to read, and learned

to write. Then he took Greek classes, mastered Greek as a foreign language, and started memorizing large chunks of the Septuagint, after which he took Greek composition classes and learned how to compose complicated and rhetorically effective sentences; then, toward the end of his life, he wrote 1 Peter.

Is this scenario plausible? Apart from the fact that we don't know of "adult education" classes in antiquity—there's no evidence they existed—I think most reasonable people would conclude that Peter probably had other things on his mind and on his hands after he came to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. He probably never thought for a single second about learning how to become a rhetorically skilled Greek author.

Some scholars have suggested that Peter did not *directly* write 1 Peter (as I've indicated, almost no one thinks he wrote 2 Peter), but that he *indirectly* wrote it, for example, by dictating the letter to a scribe. Some have noted that the letter is written "through Silvanus" (5:12) and thought that maybe Silvanus wrote down Peter's thoughts for him. I deal with this question of whether scribes or secretaries actually ever composed such letter-essays in Chapter 4. The answer is, "Almost certainly not." But for now I can say at least a couple of words about the case of 1 Peter.

First off, scholars now widely recognize that when the author indicates that he wrote the book "through Silvanus," he is indicating not the name of his secretary, but the person who was carrying the letter to the recipients. Authors who used secretaries don't refer to them in this way.

But why not suppose that Peter used someone else, other than Silvanus, as a secretary? It would help to imagine how this theory is supposed to work exactly. Peter could not have *dictated* this letter in Greek to a secretary any more than he could have written it in Greek. That would have required him to be perfectly fluent in Greek, to have mastered rhetorical techniques in Greek,

and to have had an intimate familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures in Greek. None of that is plausible. Nor can one easily think that he dictated the letter in Aramaic and the secretary translated it into Greek. The letter does not read like a Greek translation of an Aramaic original, but as an original Greek composition with Greek rhetorical flourishes. Moreover the letter presupposes the knowledge of the Greek Old Testament, so the person who composed the letter (whether orally or in writing) must have known the Scriptures in Greek.

Is it possible, then, that the historical Peter directed someone to write a letter, basically told him what to say, and let him produce it? To that there are two responses. First, it would seem that if someone else actually composed the letter, it would be *that* person, not Peter, who was the author. But the other person is never named. Even in Paul's letters that are coauthored (almost all of them) he names the others, even though he probably wrote them himself. In this case, Peter would not have even written the thing. And it should be remembered that there are good grounds for thinking that the letter was written after Peter had died, since it alludes to Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70.

But even more compelling is this. Where in the ancient world do we have anything at all analogous to this hypothetical situation of someone writing a letter-essay for someone else and putting the other person's name on it—the name of the person who did *not* write it—rather than his own name? So far as I know, there is not a single instance of any such procedure attested from antiquity or any discussion, in any ancient source, of this being a legitimate practice. Or even an illegitimate one. Such a thing is never discussed.

There are plenty of instances of another phenomenon, however. This is the phenomenon of Christian authors writing pseudonymous works, falsely claiming to be a famous person. Ancient scholars would have called a book like that a "falsely

inscribed” writing, a “lie,” an “illegitimate” child. Modern people would simply call it a forgery.

CHAPTER THREE

Forgeries in the Name of Paul

WHEN I BECAME A BORN-AGAIN Christian in 1971, I was eager to read and learn all I could about the Scriptures. I had no idea at the time that there was such a thing as biblical scholarship, or that there were books written by real experts who had mastered the relevant ancient languages—Greek and Hebrew, for example—and plumbed all the ancient sources for years on end in order to provide historically accurate accounts. I was just as happy with a good novel about, say, Jesus or Paul as with something serious. And novels, of course, make for easy reading, just the sort of thing I liked.

During the preceding year one of the best-selling biblical novels of all time had appeared, Taylor Caldwell's *Great Lion of God,* a fictional account of the life of the apostle Paul. For eight months it had been on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and as far as I was concerned, if that many people read it, it must be accurate and informative. So I devoured it. It was only later in life that I realized just how much fiction there was in this "historical" novel. I remember, years after, fervently hoping that I hadn't gotten too much of my "common knowledge" about Paul from this fantastical account.

The one episode that stuck with me over the years involved Caldwell's attempt to explain why Paul was so ripe for conversion to become a follower of Jesus after being such a violent persecutor of the church. The way she mapped out the scenario, roughly, was this. As a very young teenager Paul was extremely

zealous for his Jewish faith and strove mightily to keep the Jewish law. But at one point he succumbed to an irresistible temptation. It involved a tryst out at the local lake with a dark-haired slave girl. This sexual encounter created an enormous burden of guilt in the young Paul, which he tried to assuage by becoming even more hyperreligious. As a young man, he heard of the followers of Jesus, who were preaching that salvation can come to people who do *not* keep the law. Salvation comes simply through faith in Christ. Paul became incensed and got official permission to oppose and persecute them. This was a further way of working out his own personal guilt; by engaging in religious zeal he assuaged his conscience. But he found that the harder and harder he pressed for keeping the Jewish law in all its rigorous details, the more overwhelmed he was with guilt for having broken it.

Then he had a vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus. He realized for the first time both that he could not really keep the law and that he did not need to. Jesus brought a release from the deeply hidden guilt within him, and out of profound gratitude he threw himself with equal zeal into being a missionary for the church rather than its persecutor.

Caldwell's long book was a compelling read, especially for an eager teenager wanting to know more about the truth of his newfound faith. As it turns out, though, the entire plot is a fiction. There is no historical record of Paul's sexual fling at the local pond and no indication that he felt tremendous guilt over being unable to keep the law, even though a lot of Christians continue to misinterpret Paul that way. We have a reasonable understanding of what Paul thought, since he has left us some letters (all in the New Testament). When he talks about his Jewish life before Jesus, even though he does indicate that he was extremely zealous for the law, he makes it quite clear that it was not because of guilt over being unable to keep it. On the contrary, Paul indicates that as a faithful Jew he was "blameless" in keeping the law (Phil.

3:6). When he became a follower of Jesus, it was not to resolve internal conflict and guilt. It was because he came to realize that Christ's death was the only thing important for salvation, and everything else, even the law, was as worthless as "garbage" (as he puts it in Phil. 3:8)[1]

Taylor Caldwell, of course, had access to Paul's own writings and could have known what he actually said about his life before Jesus. But probably the reality of his life didn't make as good a story as the idea of the tryst with the slave girl. Having the true account from the horse's mouth (or in this case the Great Lion's) has never stopped people from telling fictional accounts about Paul.

Ancient Fictions About Paul

OF ALL THE CHRISTIANS who have ever lived, probably no one has had more stories told about him than Paul. We still have a number of ancient legendary accounts, just as we have for Peter. In the case of Paul we have a record of someone actually being caught red-handed fabricating stories about him and being punished for it. Ancient people saw fabrications about historical figures (i.e., made-up stories) much as they saw forgeries (false authorial claims): they were *pseuda,* "falsehoods" or "lies," and they normally were not tolerated.

Many of the ancient fabricated accounts can be found in a book that has survived the ravages of time only in bits and pieces, called the *Acts of Paul*. The narrative describes the missionary activities of Paul, his preaching, and his amazing miracles. Probably the most famous part of the story involves Paul's conversion of a wealthy young woman named Thecla, who abandons her fiancé to become Paul's devoted follower.

Paul is said to have arrived in the city of Iconium and to have been welcomed into the house of a Christian named Onesiphorus. There he preaches a sermon. But it is a sermon quite unlike anything Paul himself teaches in his own letters in the New Testament, where his message always concerns the need to believe in Jesus's death and resurrection for salvation. Here, in the *Acts of Paul,* the apostle's message is one of sexual abstinence. Only the pure in heart and body, preserved through remaining sexually chaste, can inherit the kingdom. This applies not only to single people, but also to those who are married. Sex is forbidden.

Thecla, who lives next door, happens to be sitting in her second-floor window and overhears the sermon. She is engaged to a wealthy and prominent man, but decides on the basis of what she has heard to abandon her wedding plans and follow Paul. Her mother and her aggrieved fiancé try to dissuade her, but to no avail. Rejected and angry, they turn her over to the authorities to be burned at the stake for violating social custom. She miraculously escapes and becomes Paul's follower. The rest of the story is about her adventures with Paul and her persecutions.

In another city she resists the sexual advances of an aristocrat and once more is condemned to death. This time she is to be thrown to the wild beasts. She is upset, though, that she might die before she has been baptized into her new faith. Seeing a vat of water filled with man-eating seals (whatever those might be), she throws herself in and declares herself baptized. God performs another miracle, and Thecla escapes intact. Finally she reunites with the apostle Paul, informs him of her desire to spread the word of the gospel, and is authorized by him to do so.

I've given just a brief sketch here of this fairly long and interesting story. The full account was very popular among some Christian groups in the early centuries. And it caused quite a stir among church leaders who were offended by the significant role

it gave to Thecla as someone who could baptize (herself!) and preach the gospel, even though she was a woman. By the second century, most churches reserved such ministerial duties for men. But these stories, through no less significant a figure than Paul, seemed to authorize women to engage in them. Moreover, the "gospel" of Paul in this text is all about sexual abstinence and the avoidance of marriage. In other churches it was taught that the family was important, that the male leaders of the churches should be married, that their wives should have babies and be submissive to their husbands in all things. The alternative perspective of the Thecla story led to some serious divisions in the church.[2]

We know this because the first time an ancient author mentions the story, it is in order to oppose it. The writer was the famous Christian theologian, defender of the faith, and misogynist Tertullian, who around 200 CE wrote a treatise on baptism. In this treatise he attacks women who used the story of Thecla as a justification for practicing baptism since, for Tertullian, only men should be allowed to baptize. Tertullian argues that this story of Thecla was fabricated and had no historical value. In fact, he says the author of the story was an elder ("presbyter") in a church of Asia Minor. He was caught fabricating the account, was put on trial in the church, and was relieved of his duties. Thus, for Tertullian, the story cannot be used to authorize women's baptism practices.[3]

Scholars frequently cite this brief but fascinating passage from Tertullian in order to show that forgers were not welcomed in the church. I wish that were the point of the story, since I think it is true that forgers were not welcome. But unfortunately, the story is not about a forger. It is about a fabricator. This Asia Minor presbyter did not write a book claiming to be Paul; he wrote a book with fabricated stories *about* Paul. At the same time, it is true to say that he was treated as forgers were also

generally treated. He was severely reprimanded for not speaking the truth.

With good reason a number of scholars have argued that the presbyter did not actually invent these stories about Thecla, but simply retold them, editing them for his own purpose. In other words, the stories were floating around in the oral tradition for a long time before the end of the second century, when he produced his account. This may well be the case, as we will see later in this chapter when we return to the stories. But in any event, *somebody* made up the stories, since they are not historical. The author or editor who wrote them down was found out. And the consequences were not good.

Noncanonical Writings Forged in the Name of Paul

IF CHRISTIANS MADE UP stories *about* Paul, did they also make up writings allegedly *by* Paul? This is the question we asked about Peter in Chapter 2, and the answer here will be the same. There are numerous forgeries in the name of Paul from the early church, all of them, so far as we can tell, written to "authorize" certain views in the name of this great author. Some of these forgeries survive; we know of other forgeries that once existed, but have since been lost.

FORGERIES PERPETRATED BY MARCION

You might think that someone of Paul's stature would have been a unifying influence on the early church. As it turns out, nothing could be farther from the truth. At about the time the presbyter of Asia Minor was propounding stories about Paul that led to splits over the role of women in the church, an even bigger menace to the church's unity was coming from a completely

different direction. It involved the teachings of one of Paul's greatest early admirers, the second-century teacher and theologian Marcion.[4]

It is unfortunate that we no longer have any of Marcion's own writings. They were deemed heretical ("false teachings") and destroyed. What we do have are the writings of his opponents, including especially the already-mentioned Tertullian, who wrote a five-volume refutation of Marcion's teachings. We still have this work, and it is a gold mine of information about one of the most divisive persons in the history of the early church.

Marcion came from the city of Sinope on the southern coast of the Black Sea. His father was reportedly a bishop of the local church, and so Marcion was raised, in the early second century, in a Christian household. His family was from the upper class, and he himself became an entrepreneur as a young man, apparently in the shipbuilding business. After he amassed a good deal of wealth, he left Asia Minor for the capital city of the empire, Rome, where he joined the church and participated actively in its ministry. Scholars have traditionally dated Marcion's time in Rome as 139–144 CE.

It was in Rome that Marcion developed his distinctive theological ideas. Marcion was especially attracted to Paul's idea that a person is made right with God not by doing the requirements of the Jewish law (the "works of the law," as Paul puts it), but only by having faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Paul, in such books as Galatians and Romans in the New Testament, emphasizes that no one can be right with God through the works of the law. He preached his "gospel" (literally, the "good news") to Gentiles, telling them that Christ's death could bring a reconciliation with God for all who have faith.

Marcion saw this contrast between the law of the Jews and the gospel of Christ in extreme terms and pushed the contrast to what he saw as its logical consequences. Where there is law,

there is no gospel. The law and the gospel are fundamentally distinct. They are contrary things. The Old Testament has nothing to do with the gospel of Paul. The necessary conclusion, for Marcion, was that the God who gave the Jewish law must not be the God who saved people from their sins, which they incurred by breaking the law. In other words, the Old Testament God was not the same as the God of Jesus and his apostle Paul. There were literally two Gods.

Marcion argued that the God of the Old Testament was the Jewish God who created this world, chose Israel to be his people, and then gave them his law. No one was able to keep this law, however. So the Old Testament God was perfectly justified in condemning everyone to damnation. He was a just, wrathful God—not evil, just ruthlessly judicial. The God of Jesus, on the other hand, was a God of love, mercy, and forgiveness. This good God, superior to the God of the Jews, sent Jesus into the world in order to die for the sins of others, to save people from the wrathful God of the Old Testament. Salvation comes, then, by believing in Jesus's death.

Marcion set out to prove his doctrine of the two Gods by writing a book called the *Antitheses* (i.e., the "contrary statements"). In it he showed that there were severe inconsistencies between the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus and Paul. The God of the Old Testament, for example, orders the Israelites to take over the promised land, first by destroying the city of Jericho (Josh. 6). He instructs them to go into the city and slaughter every man, woman, and child in it. Is this the same God, asks Marcion, who says, "Love your enemies," "Turn the other cheek," and "Pray for those who persecute you"? It doesn't *sound* like the same God. Because it's not.

The God of the Old Testament sent his prophets, one of whom was Elisha. One day, we are told in the Old Testament, Elisha was verbally harassed by a group of boys making fun of his bald

head. Elisha called the wrath of God down upon the boys, and two she-bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them to death (2 Kings 2). Is this the same God who said, "Let the little children come unto me"? No, there are two different Gods.

Since the God of Jesus is not the God of the Old Testament and is therefore not the creator of the world, Jesus could not belong to this created order. He could not be born into this world as a flesh-and-blood being; otherwise he would belong to the God of the Jews, just as every other created being does. Jesus must have come from heaven, from the true God, directly. For that reason he was not an actual, physical human being. He only seemed to be. In other words, Marcion was a docetist (see Chapter 2). For this view he could again appeal to the writings of Paul, who stated that Jesus came into this world "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). For Marcion, it was all an appearance.

Marcion is the first Christian of record to have insisted on a distinct canon of Scripture, that is, a collection of books he considered sacred authorities. Marcion's canon was remarkably short by most standards. Since the Jewish God was not the true God, his book was not part of the Christian Scriptures. There was no Christian Old Testament. The canon, instead, was made up of two sections. One part consisted of Paul's letters. Marcion apparently knew ten of these, all the ones in the New Testament except 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, the so-called pastoral letters. Moreover, in his letters Paul constantly refers to his "gospel." So Marcion included, as the other part of his canon, a Gospel account of the life of Jesus. This was apparently a version of the Gospel of Luke.

The problem with this eleven-book canon is that even these books quote the Old Testament as an authority and seem to affirm the creation as coming from the true God. How could that be, if Marcion's views of Paul and Jesus were right? Marcion had

an easy answer to that. He believed that after Jesus left this earth, his followers, the disciples, changed his teachings and went back to their old Jewish ways, misinterpreting his gospel message and turning it around to affirm the goodness of the creator God and his creation. They never fully understood Jesus's teaching that the creator was not the true God. That is why Paul had to be called to be an apostle. The apostles before him had altered Jesus's teachings, and so Paul was commissioned to set things straight. According to Marcion, this wide misinterpretation of Jesus's message had affected lots of other Christians, including the scribes who copied the writings of Paul and Luke. These eleven books had in fact been miscopied over the years. Scribes who did not understand the truth—that there are two Gods, that Jesus was not really born and is not really human, and so on—altered the texts and inserted false views into them. Marcion then edited his eleven books, eliminating from them portions that seemed too Jewish.

In addition to these eleven books, Marcion and his followers had other books forged in Paul's name. We know this from a fragmentary text that comes to us from the second century, a text that discusses which books belong in the true cannon of Scripture, as opposed to the canons of Marcion and other heretics. This text is called the Muratorian Canon, named after the Italian scholar, Muratori, who discovered it.[5] Among other things the Muratorian Canon indicates that the Marcionites, the followers of Marcion, had forged two books in the name of Paul, a letter to the Christians in the city of Alexandria and a letter to those in the town of Laodicea. These letters to the Alexandrians and Laodiceans, regrettably, no longer survive. But we can be relatively certain that if they ever turn up, they will represent even more forcefully than the books of Marcion's canon his distinctive views about the two Gods, the non-human Jesus, and the salvation he brought.

3 Corinthians

It was quite common for "orthodox" Christians (i.e., Christians who accepted the theological views that eventually became widely accepted throughout Christianity) to charge "heretics" (those who taught "false teachings") with forging documents in the names of the apostles in order to support their views. We will see much more of this phenomenon in Chapter 6. The *Gospel of Peter,* for example, was charged with being heretical, as teaching a docetic view of Jesus. But orthodox Christians forged documents of their own. We have far more of this kind of forgery, since orthodox writings were more likely to be preserved for posterity, even if they were not actually written by their alleged authors.

Everyone familiar with the New Testament knows that it contains two letters by Paul to the church in Corinth, called 1 and 2 Corinthians. What most people do not know is that outside of the New Testament is a book called *3 Corinthians*. It is a fascinating book, penned in the name of Paul to oppose heretics like Marcion. But Paul did not write it. It is an orthodox forgery of the second century.[6]

Like the stories of Thecla, *3 Corinthians* is now found in the *Acts of Paul*. According to the account, two heretics came to Corinth propounding their false views, Simon the Magician, whom we have met before, and Cleobius. The Corinthian Christians were disturbed by what they were hearing and wrote to Paul asking him to correct the heretical teachings and to come in person to straighten out those who had succumbed to them.

This letter to Paul, forged in the name of the Corinthians, is the first part of *3 Corinthians*. It sets out the claims of the two false teachers, namely, that it is wrong to appeal to the Old Testament prophets, that God is "not almighty" (i.e., that the creator God is not God over all), that there will be no future resurrection

of the flesh, that the world was not created by God, that Christ did not come to earth bearing real flesh, that he was not born of Mary, and that the world was not created by God, but by angels.

Much of this sounds like the teaching of Marcion. As we have seen, Marcion devalued human "flesh," because he rejected the idea that the creator of this world is the true God. And the creator, of course, is the one who made fleshly beings. As a consequence, the followers of Marcion did not believe that the afterlife would be lived "in the flesh" there would be no physical resurrection at the end of time. So too Christ could not have had real flesh and was not actually born. Since the Old Testament is not part of the Christian Bible, for Marcion, one cannot appeal to the prophets, and the creator God is not the true God.

At least one aspect of the alleged teachings of Simon and Cleobius, however, does not sound like Marcion, their teaching that the world was created "by angels." Marcion maintained that it was created by the God of the Old Testament. Either some of Marcion's followers thought that the Jewish God had created the world through powerful angelic intermediaries, or the fictitious opponents of the Corinthians are not followers of Marcion per se, but are "heretics" with views very similar to Marcion's.

The rest of *3 Corinthians* is Paul's letter in response. This letter is much longer than the one from the Corinthians, and in it "Paul" argues strongly against the heretical views being propounded by the false teachers. Paul stresses that the message he preaches is the one that he received from the other apostles, "who were together with the Lord Jesus Christ at all times." In other words, his message is not unique to him. This stands in contrast to Marcion, who saw Paul as the apostle par excellence, who opposed the false teachings of the other apostles who corrupted Jesus's message. Paul goes on to stress that Jesus really was born of Mary and came in the flesh in order to redeem all

flesh and to raise people from the dead in the flesh. The true God is the creator, and the prophets were his spokespersons.

This emphasis on the "flesh" is very interesting, but also a bit ironic. One recent study of *3 Corinthians* has shown that the forger, who was intent on opposing the false teachings of the heretics, does so by teaching ideas about the flesh that are contrary to what the real, historical Paul taught.[7] Paul himself certainly believed that God had created this world and that at the end of time he would redeem it. Paul, like most Jews and Christians in his day, thought that at the end of this age there would be a bodily resurrection. That is to say, humans would face judgment, either reward or punishment, in their own bodies, which had been raised from the dead (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 15). But Paul did not call the body the "flesh." On the contrary the "flesh" meant something completely different for Paul. It meant that part of human nature that is controlled by sin and is alienated from God (see, e.g., Rom. 8:1–9). For Paul, the "flesh" needed to be overcome, since it was controlled by sin. The human *body* would be raised from the dead, but the flesh had to die.

This somewhat technical understanding of the term "flesh" came to be lost in later orthodox Christianity, when theologians began thinking that flesh and body were the same thing. And that has happened here in *3 Corinthians*. Unlike Paul, this author emphasizes the importance of flesh as a creation of God that will be raised. In other words, this is an instance in which a forger claiming to be Paul represents a point of view that is contrary to Paul's, even though he is trying to correct, in Paul's name, teachings he thinks are false.

The Letters of Paul and Seneca

A completely different agenda is found in a much later forgery of Pauline letters that was destined to become quite influential

on later Christian thinking about Paul. By the end of the second century, many Christians—not just Marcion—considered Paul to be the most important figure in the religion after Jesus. Paul was understood as the great apostle, the great spokesperson, the great theologian of the church. His writings were widely read, and his thought was deeply appreciated. But over the years Christians wondered why, if Paul was such a brilliant and astute thinker, none of the other great thinkers of his day mentions him. Why does he appear to have been a great unknown in the Roman Empire, outside of the Christian church itself?

Sometime in the fourth century an unknown author sought to address the issue and did so by forging a series of fourteen letters between Paul and the Roman philosopher Seneca.[8] Seneca was widely recognized as the greatest philosopher of his day, one of the real intellectual giants of the early Roman Empire. He was in the upper crust of elite and powerful society, as he was the tutor and later the adviser of the emperor Nero. A number of Seneca's philosophical writings were widely read in antiquity, and a good number of them survive today. But nowhere in these writings does he mention the existence of Christianity or refer to Jesus or any of the great leaders of the new faith.

These fourteen letters repair the damage. Eight of the fourteen are allegedly Seneca's letters to Paul; the other six are Paul's responses. Modern readers of these letters are often a bit disappointed that their contents are so meager. One would hope for some good juicy gossip between the greatest thinker of the first century and the greatest apostle of the church. But with one exception the letters are not meant to provide fabricated stories about life in the imperial palace, for example. They are meant to show that Paul was well placed and well respected by intellectuals of his time.

"Seneca" in his first letter praises Paul for his "wonderful exhortations to the moral life" and indicates that these are divine

teachings not spoken so much by Paul as *through* him by God. Paul, in his response, simply indicates that, yes, Seneca has spoken the truth! In another letter Seneca praises Paul's "sublime speech" and his "most venerable thoughts" and indicates that the emperor Nero himself has read the letters and has been moved by Paul's sentiments. All of this, of course, is historically bogus. Seneca had almost certainly never heard of Paul. But it makes for a good story three hundred years later.

In only one letter is there any historical reference of interest. In Letter 11 (sometimes numbered 14, since it appears to be the last one chronologically) Seneca expresses his sincere regret that Paul has been condemned to death even though he is innocent. This is a reference to the tradition that Paul was among the Christians martyred by Nero, who blamed them for starting the fire that burned the city of Rome, which he himself may have had started. Seneca states that the fire burned for six days, destroying 132 palaces and 4,000 apartment buildings. And he indicates his distress that Christians and Jews were being executed because of it by Nero, an unjust ruler "who takes pleasure in murder and uses lies as a disguise." But the emperor's days were numbered, and he would pay the penalty by enduring eternal torment: "This accursed one will be burned in the fire for all."

Here we have, then, not just a set of forgeries written in the names of Paul and Seneca centuries after they were dead, but also a fabricated account of how such an eminent philosopher both appreciated Paul and held him and his fellow Christians innocent of the charges of arson brought against them in 64 CE. Christians of later centuries took these writings with extreme seriousness. It later became a commonplace that Seneca knew the apostle Paul and his Christian message, and that the famous philosopher, the greatest mind of his day, was entirely open to the gospel of Christ.

AS WITH PETER, SO with Paul. Outside of the New Testament there are numerous fabricated stories told about him and a number of writings only allegedly by him. All of the writings attributed to Paul from outside the New Testament were forged. Are there any Pauline forgeries within the New Testament?

Here again there is a broad scholarly consensus. There are thirteen letters that claim to have been written by Paul in the New Testament, nearly half of the New Testament books. But six of these were probably not written by Paul. Scholars have called these six the "deutero-Pauline" letters, meaning that they have a "secondary" standing in the corpus of Paul's writings.

Virtually all scholars agree that seven of the Pauline letters are authentic: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. These seven cohere well together and appear stylistically, theologically, and in most every other way to be by the same person. They all claim to be written by Paul. There is scarce reason to doubt that they actually were written by Paul.

The other six differ in significant ways from this core group of seven. Three of them—1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—are so much alike that most scholars are convinced that they were written by the same person. The other three are usually assigned to three different authors. There is greatest scholarly agreement about the first group of three, and so I begin by discussing why scholars have long considered them to be forgeries.

THE PASTORAL LETTERS: 1 AND 2 TIMOTHY AND TITUS

The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus have been grouped together and called the "Pastoral epistles" since the eighteenth century. The name derives from the subject matter; the author, who claims to be Paul, is allegedly writing to church leaders, his companions Timothy and Titus, to instruct them on their pastoral or ministerial duties in their respective churches. The three letters have many striking similarities to one another, as I show in a moment; but they are also three distinct letters with, probably, three distinct purposes, just as the authentic letters of Paul each has a distinct purpose. Before showing why most scholars consider them to be written by someone other than Paul, I should give a brief summary of each letter.

Summary of the Letters

First Timothy claims to be a letter from Paul to his junior colleague Timothy, whom he has left behind to be the leader of the church in the city of Ephesus. In the letter "Paul" gives Timothy instructions pertaining to how to run and organize the church. He is to oppose groups of false teachers who propound wild theories involving "myths and genealogies" and who promote a kind of rigorous ascetic activity as a spiritual exercise, in which, for example, marriage is forbidden and certain strict dietary restrictions must be observed. He is to make sure that only the right kind of person is appointed to the church offices of bishop and deacon. In particular, the offices are to be occupied only by men who are married, are not recent converts, and live upright lives. Most of the letter provides instruction on how Christians are to conduct themselves and interact with one another, for example, how to pray, how to behave toward the elderly and widows, and how to relate to material wealth.

Among the sundry problems addressed by the author of 1 Timothy is the role of women in the church. In a strident passage

the author indicates that women are to be submissive and not to exercise any authority over a man, for example, through teaching. They, instead, are "to keep silent." This, for the author, is how things simply ought to be, as seen from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden, when the first man, Adam, was deceived by his wife, Eve, and ate the forbidden fruit. It was all the woman's fault. But she, the woman, can still be saved, assures the author, by "bearing children" (2:11–15). In other words, women are to be silent, submissive, and pregnant.

Even though 2 Timothy is addressed to the same person, it is written to a different situation. In this case Paul is allegedly writing from prison in Rome (we're never told where 1 Timothy was written); he has been put on trial and is expecting a second trial soon in which he will be condemned to death. He writes Timothy to encourage him in his ongoing pastoral duties and his rooting out of the false teachers who have infiltrated the church. "Paul" expresses a good deal of love and concern for Timothy in this letter; it is far and away the most personalized of the Pastorals. And he hopes that Timothy will be able to join him in Rome soon, bringing some of his personal possessions.

The book of Titus sounds very much like the book of 1 Timothy, almost as if it is a *Reader's Digest* version of the longer letter. But it is addressed by Paul to Titus, a different companion, who is allegedly the pastor of the church on the island of Crete. Paul writes to have his representative correct those who are delivering false teachings, which again involve "genealogies" and "mythologies." He also gives instructions to various groups within the church: older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves.

The First Scholarly Suspicions About the Letters

These three letters are particularly significant for our discussion, because they were the first books of Paul that, in the history of modern scholarship, were extensively argued to be forgeries. The big moment came in 1807 with the publication of a letter by the German scholar Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher was one of the most important Christian theologians of the nineteenth century. He was famous for defending the Christian faith against its "cultured despisers" and for developing distinct theological views that influenced theologians well into the twentieth century. There are still scholars today who specialize in studying the works and teaching of Schleiermacher. Among his many writings is an open letter sent to a pastor in 1807 in which he tried to demonstrate that 1 Timothy was not written by Paul.

Schleiermacher argued that 1 Timothy used words and developed ideas that were at odds with those in the other letters of Paul, including 2 Timothy and Titus. Moreover the false teachings attacked in the letter do not sound like anything we know about from Paul's day. Instead, they sound like heresies of the second century generally called "Gnostic."

Like Marcion, Gnostic Christians maintained that this world is not the creation of the one true God. But unlike Marcion, Gnostics did not believe there were just two Gods. They maintained that there were many divine beings in the divine realm that had all come into existence at some point in eternity past, and that this world was created when one of the divine beings fell from the divine realm and came to be entrapped in this miserable world of matter.[9] The Gnostic religions taught that some of us have a spark of the divine trapped in our bodies. Salvation will come to the spark only when it learns the truth of where it came from and who it really is. In other words, the inner element of the divine within us needs to acquire the true and secret "knowledge" that can set it free. In Greek, the word for "knowledge" is *gnosis,* and so this kind of religion is called Gnosticism. According to

Gnostic Christians, Christ brings salvation by providing the secret knowledge, not, for example, by dying on the cross. And since the goal of salvation was to escape the trappings of the human body, many Gnostics were rigidly ascetic, urging their followers to treat the body severely, for example, in what was eaten and in avoiding the pleasures of sex.

Schleiermacher argued that the "myths and genealogies" opposed in 1 Timothy sound like the mythologies propounded by these later, second-century Gnostics. In connection with the other problems of the book, such as the non-Pauline vocabulary, this shows that it was a later production, forged in the name of Paul. Soon after Schleiermacher wrote his open letter-essay, other scholars came forward arguing not only that he was right about 1 Timothy, but also that the other two pastoral letters were written by the same person. All three were forged.

Current Scholarship: Are the Letters Forged?

An incredible amount of scholarship has been devoted to the pastoral letters just in the past thirty or forty years, two centuries removed from Schleiermacher. Much of it is tedious to normal human beings, but fascinating to those of us who are abnormal scholars. I can't summarize it all here. Instead, I simply give a few reasons for thinking that all three letters were written by the same person, and that this person was not Paul.[10]

I should admit at the outset that some recent scholars have argued strenuously that 2 Timothy is so different from the other books that it should be considered separately, as by a different author from the others, possibly Paul himself.[11] For about a year or so before I started writing this book, I myself began to be increasingly inclined to take this view. But then I did some further

serious research on the matter and am now thoroughly persuaded that whoever wrote 1 Timothy must have written 2 Timothy. The reason is that they share way too many verbal connections and similarities for these to be accidental. Just consider how they begin:

> 1 Timothy: "*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus…to Timothy…grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*"
>
> 2 Timothy: "*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus…to Timothy…grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

They are virtually the same. And even more important, there is no other letter of Paul that begins this way. Either these are by the same author, or one author is copying the writing of another. But there are reasons for thinking it is not the work of a copyist. For one thing, there are tons of verbal agreements of a similar sort. Both letters have words and phrases in common not found in any of the other letters attributed to Paul: the "promise of life" "with a pure conscience" "from a pure heart" "guard the deposit (of faith)" Paul is an "apostle, herald, and teacher." And on and on and on. What is striking is not only that these phrases and many others like them are found in these two letters, but that they are found *only* in these two letters.

That's why one of the letters isn't being written by a copyist using the other as his model. To do so would have required the copyist not only to know which words and phrases were important in the first letter, but also which of these words and phrases were, simultaneously, ones that Paul himself never used. I suppose it is theoretically possible that a very astute student of Paul in the first century read through all of Paul's letters, made a list of words that occurred in them, then read 1 Timothy, made a list

of important words there, compared the two lists, and decided to write another letter to Timothy using lots of words and phrases that occurred in the second list, but not the first. But it really stretches the imagination. It is much easier to believe that whoever wrote the one letter had his favorite terms and used them in the other letter as well. It's just that those terms were not terms used by Paul.[12]

That is one of the reasons scholars from the nineteenth century on have been convinced that Paul did not write the letters. The vocabulary and the writing style are very different from those of the other Pauline letters. In 1921 the British scholar A. N. Harrison wrote an important study of the pastoral letters in which he gave numerous statistics about the word usage in these writings. One of his most cited set of numbers is that there are 848 different words used in the pastoral letters. Of that number 306—over one-third of them!—do not occur in any of the other Pauline letters of the New Testament. That's an inordinately high number; especially given the fact that about two-thirds of these 306 words are used by Christian authors living in the second century. That suggests that this author is using a vocabulary that was becoming more common after the days of Paul, and that he too therefore lived after Paul.[13]

A number of scholars have called Harrison's use of statistics into question, since, as we all know, you can make statistics say just about anything you want them to say. But the arguments over word usage have gotten increasingly refined over the ninety years since he wrote, and in almost every study done, it is clear that the word usage of the Pastorals is different from that in Paul's other letters.[14] At the same time, probably not too much stock should be placed in mere numbers. Everyone, after all, uses different words on different occasions, and most of us have a much richer stock of vocabulary than shows up in any given letter or set of letters we write.

The problem is that a large number of factors all seem to point in the same direction, showing that this author is not Paul. For one thing, sometimes this author uses the same words as Paul, but means something different by them. The term "faith" was of supreme importance to Paul. In books such as Romans and Galatians faith refers to the trust a person has in Christ to bring about salvation through his death. In other words, the term describes a *relationship* with another; faith is trust "in" Christ. The author of the Pastorals also uses the term "faith." But here it is not about a relationship with Christ; faith now means the body of teaching that makes up the Christian religion. That is "the faith" (see Titus 1:13). Same word, different meaning. So too with other key terms, such as "righteousness."

Even more significant, some ideas and concepts in the pastoral letters stand at odds with what you find in the letters that Paul certainly wrote. For example, we have seen that Paul was highly concerned with arguing that performing the "works of the law" could not contribute to one's right standing before God. It was not the Jewish law that could bring salvation, but the death and resurrection of Jesus. When Paul talks about "works," that is what he means: doing the things that the Jewish law requires, such as getting circumcised, keeping kosher, and observing the Sabbath. In the Pastorals, however, the Jewish law is no longer even an issue, and the author speaks of works as "good works," that is, doing good deeds for other people. The term occurs this way six times in 1 Timothy alone. This author is concerned to show that by being a morally good person you cannot earn your salvation. That may be true, but it is a completely different idea from Paul's; Paul was concerned about whether you kept the Jewish law as a means to salvation (you should not), not if you did good deeds for it.

Or take a completely different idea, marriage. In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul is insistent that people who are single should try to remain

single, just as he is. His reason is that the end of all things is near, and people should devote themselves to spreading the word, not to establishing their social lives. But how does that square with the view in the Pastorals? Here the author *insists* that the leaders of the church be married. In Paul's letters it is better not to be married; in the Pastorals it is required that people (at least church leaders) be married.

Or think about the basic issue of how a person is "saved." For Paul himself, only through the death and resurrection of Jesus can a person be saved. And for the Pastorals? For women, at least, we're told in 1 Timothy 2 that they will "be saved" by bearing children. It is hard to know what that means, exactly, but it certainly doesn't mean what Paul meant!

Probably the biggest problem with accepting the Pastorals as having come from Paul involves the historical situation that they seem to presuppose. Paul, like Jesus before him, thought he was living at the very end of time. When Jesus was raised from the dead, that was the sign that the end had already started and that the future resurrection of the dead was about to take place. According to Jewish thinking the resurrection was to arrive when this age had come to an end. That's why Paul called Jesus the "first fruits of the resurrection" in 1 Corinthians 15:20. This is an agricultural metaphor. The farmhands celebrate the first day of harvest by throwing a party that night; this commemorates the "first fruits" of the harvest. And when do they go out to get the rest of the harvest? The next day—not twenty or two thousand years later. Jesus is the first fruits, because with him the resurrection has started, and very soon everyone—all the dead—will be raised for judgment. That is why Paul thinks he himself will be alive when Jesus returns from heaven (see 1 Thess. 4:14–18).

In the meantime, though, the church has to grow and survive in the world. Paul thought that in this short interim period between the resurrection of Jesus and the end of time, the Spirit

of God had been given to the church and to each individual making up the church. When a person was baptized, he or she received the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), and the Spirit gave the person a spiritual "gift." Some of the baptized were given the gift of teaching, others of prophecy, others of healing, others of speaking in angelic tongues, others of interpreting those tongues. All of these gifts were meant to help the Christian community function together as a unit (1 Cor. 12–14). None of the gifts was paltry or insignificant. They all mattered. Everyone in the church was equally endowed with a gift, so that in the church all were equals. Slaves were on the same level as masters, women were equal with men. That's why Paul could say, "In Christ there is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). There was equality.

When problems arose in one of Paul's churches—for example, the church of Corinth, for which we have the best documentation—he wrote to deal with them. It is interesting to read his correspondence with the Corinthians. The church was in a mess. There were divisions and episodes of infighting, some members were taking others to civil court, the worship services were chaos, and there were harsh disagreements over major ethical issues, such as whether it was right to eat meat that had been sacrificed to pagan idols. Some people denied that there was to be a future resurrection, and there was gross immorality—some men were visiting prostitutes and bragging about it in church, and one fellow was sleeping with his stepmother.

To address these severe problems, Paul appeals to the church as a whole and to the individuals in it. He urges them to use their spiritual gifts for the mutual good. He appeals to them to act as a unit. He exhorts them to begin behaving in an ethical fashion. He chastises them for not accepting the proper teaching, for example, about the future resurrection.

The one thing Paul does not do is write to the leaders of the church in Corinth and tell them to get their parishioners in order. Why is that? Because there *were* no leaders of the church in Corinth. There were no bishops or deacons. There were no pastors. There was a group of individuals, each of whom had a gift of the Spirit, in this brief time before the end came.

Contrast that with what you have in the Pastorals. Here you do not have individuals endowed by the Spirit working together to form the community. Here you have the pastors Timothy and Titus. You have the church leaders: bishops and deacons. You have hierarchy, structure, organization. That is to say, you have a different historical situation than you had in the days of Paul.

If you expect Jesus to come back soon—say, sometime this month—there is no real need for a hierarchical system of organization and leadership. You simply need to get along for the short term. But if Jesus does not return, and you need to settle in for the long haul, things will be different. You have to get organized. You have to have leadership. You have to have someone run the show. You have to have teachers who can root out the false teaching in your midst. You have to specify how people should relate to one another socially: masters to slaves, husbands to wives, parents to children. In a hierarchical system there is no equality; there is leadership. That's what you find in the pastoral letters—churches settling in for the long haul. But that's not what you find in the historical Paul. For the historical Paul, there was not going to *be* a long haul. The end was coming soon.

As I said at the outset of this discussion, some scholars have been willing to concede that 1 Timothy and Titus, which is closely tied to 1 Timothy, are pseudepigraphal, but that 2 Timothy may stem from Paul. I've tried to show that this view can't work, because whoever wrote 1 Timothy also wrote 2 Timothy. If the one is forged, so too is the other. That doesn't mean the two letters are addressing the same concerns or were written for the same

purpose; it just means the same author wrote them. But one point sometimes raised is that there is so much personal information in 2 Timothy, it is hard to see how it could be forged. Why, for example, would a forger tell his alleged reader (who was not actually his reader!) to be sure to bring his cloak to him when he comes and also the books he left behind (2 Tim. 4:13)?

This objection has been convincingly answered by one of the great scholars of ancient forgery, Norbert Brox, who gives compelling evidence that this kind of "verisimilitude" (as I called it in Chapter 1) is *typical* for forgeries. Making the letter sound "homey" removes the suspicion that it's forged. The personal notices in 2 Timothy (there are fewer in Titus and fewer still in 1 Timothy) serve, then, to convince readers that this really is written by Paul, even though it is not.[15] But why does an author forge letters like this?

Why Were the Pastoral Letters Forged?

The most obvious answer is that the author is someone facing new problems in a generation after Paul, problems that Paul himself never addressed, and he wants to deal with them in the name of an authority who will be listened to. And who in Paul's churches has greater authority than Paul himself? So the author dealt with the problem of false teachings, for example, of those propounding "myths and genealogies" in 1 Timothy and of other false teachers who claimed that the resurrection "had already happened" in 2 Timothy. He also dealt with problems involving church leadership and with problems over with the roles of women in the church. He did all this by pretending to be Paul.

Some scholars have thought that something even more precise may have occasioned these forgeries. In a very interesting and influential study, the American scholar Dennis MacDonald argues that the pastoral letters were written to oppose the views

that were in circulation in the stories connected with Thecla.[16] It is true that the *Acts of Paul,* where the Thecla stories are now found, were probably written later than the Pastorals by as much as seventy to eighty years. But the stories recorded in the *Acts of Paul* had been circulating for a very long time before the presbyter in Asia Minor fabricated his account. And in remarkable ways, the views found in the Thecla stories contrast with the views advocated in the Pastorals. Could one of them have been written to authorize a contrary view under the authority of Paul?

In the *Acts of Paul,* marriage is disparaged. In the Pastorals marriage is encouraged; church leaders in fact are *required* to be married. In the *Acts of Paul* sexual activity is condemned; only by remaining chaste can you enter the kingdom of heaven. In the Pastorals sexual activity is urged; women will be saved only by having babies. In the *Acts of Paul* women—specifically Thecla—are allowed to teach and exercise authority. In the Pastorals women are to be silent and submissive; they are not allowed to teach or exercise authority. Since the pastoral letters are directly opposing the views found in the stories incorporated into the *Acts of Paul,* MacDonald argues that the letters were forged by someone who had heard the stories about Thecla and wanted to set the record straight from Paul's "true" point of view.

This is a very appealing argument, and it may be right. But for many scholars the biggest problem with it has to do with the dates of the materials. The *Acts of Paul* was probably written by the presbyter of Asia Minor some decades after the Pastorals were produced. The stories the presbyter used may have been much older, but without corroborating evidence, it is hard to say. So a different historical reconstruction may be more plausible.

It goes like this. Paul's churches were split in lots of ways, as we have seen. One of the splits involved issues of sex, sexuality, and gender. Some Pauline Christians thought that women should be treated as equals and given equal status and authority with

men, since Paul did say that "in Christ there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). Other Pauline Christians thought that women were equal with men only "in Christ," by which they meant "in theory," not in social reality. These Christians were keen to tone down Paul's own emphasis on women, and one of them decided to write a set of letters, the Pastorals, that authorized his view in Paul's name. He had other issues he wanted to address as well: the nature of the leadership in the church, the need to suppress false teaching, the relations of slaves and masters, parents and children, and so on. He packaged all of these sundry issues in a set of letters and wrote them in the name of Paul, forging them to provide them with the authoritative voice they needed.

But not everyone was convinced and not everyone accepted these letters as coming from Paul. Remember that Marcion, for example, did not have them (it is hard to know if he was aware of them). Moreover, the other side of the split over the role of women was not destroyed by the appearance of the pastoral letters. It lived on, seeing Paul as an opponent of marriage and of sex, but as a proponent of women. This other side told stories about Paul that supported their views, and these stories eventually came to center on one of Paul's key converts, Thecla. At one time in the second century both sets of documents were in wide circulation, the fabricated stories about Paul and Thecla and the forged letters of Paul that eventually came to be included in the New Testament.

2 Thessalonians

When I was a conservative evangelical Christian in my late teens and early twenties, there were few things I was more certain of, religiously, than the fact that Jesus was soon to return from heaven to take me and my fellow believers out of the world, at the "rapture" before the final tribulation came. We read all

sorts of books that supported our view. Few people today realize that *the* bestselling book in English in the 1970s, apart from the Bible, was *The Late, Great Planet Earth,* written by the fundamentalist Christian Hal Lindsey. Based on a careful (or careless, depending on your perspective) study of the book of Revelation and other biblical books of prophecy, Lindsey wrote with assurance about what was about to transpire in the Middle East as the superpowers of the Soviet Union, China, the European Union, and finally the United States converged in a massive confrontation leading to an all-out nuclear holocaust, right before Jesus returned. All of this, we were told, had to happen before the end of the 1980s, as Scripture itself taught.

It obviously never happened. And now there *is* no Soviet Union. But that hasn't stopped people from writing about how the end will come very soon now, in our own day, at any time. On the recent book-selling front, dwarfing the sales of the Harry Potter books has been the multivolume *Left Behind* series, about those who will not be taken in the imminent rapture. These books were coauthored by Jerry Jenkins and Timothy LaHaye, the latter of whom previously enjoyed a career writing books with his wife, Beverly, about sex for Christians.

What most of the millions of people who believe that Jesus is coming back soon, in our lifetime, don't realize is that there have always been Christians who thought this about their own lifetimes. This was a prominent view among conservative Christians in the early twentieth century, in the late nineteenth century, in the eighteenth century, in the twelfth century, in the second century, in the first century—in fact, in just about every century. The one thing that all those who have ever thought this have had in common is that every one of them has been demonstrably and irrefutably wrong.

Paul himself thought the end was coming in his lifetime. Nowhere is this more clear than in one of the letters we are sure

he wrote, 1 Thessalonians. Paul wrote the Christians in Thessalonica, because some of them had become disturbed over the death of a number of their fellow believers. When he converted these people, Paul had taught them that the end of the age was imminent, that they were soon to enter the kingdom when Jesus returned. But members of the congregation had died before it happened. Had they lost out on their heavenly reward? Paul writes to assure the survivors that, no, even those who have died will be brought into the kingdom. In fact, when Jesus returns in glory on the clouds of heaven, "the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air" (4:17). Read the verse carefully: Paul expects to be one of the ones who will still be alive when it happens.

He goes on to say that it will be a sudden, unexpected event. That day will come "like a thief in the night," and when people think that all is well, "sudden destruction will come upon them" (5:2–3). The Thessalonians should be alert and prepared, because, as with the labor pains of a pregnant woman, it is possible to know that it will come very soon, but you can't predict the exact moment.

It is precisely this emphasis on the suddenness of the reappearance of Jesus, which will catch people by surprise, that makes the *second* letter that Paul allegedly wrote to the Thessalonians so interesting. This too is a book written about the second coming of Jesus, but now a completely different problem is being addressed. The readers have been "led astray" by a letter that has apparently been forged in Paul's name (2:2) saying that "the day of the Lord is at hand." The author of 2 Thessalonians, claiming to be Paul, argues that the end is not, in fact, coming right away. Certain things have to happen first. There will be some kind of political or religious uprising and rebellion, and an Antichrist-like figure will appear who will take his seat in the Temple of

Jerusalem and declare himself to be God. Only then will the "Lord Jesus" come to "destroy him with the breath of his mouth" (2:3–8).

In other words, the Thessalonians can rest assured they are not yet at the final moment of history when Jesus reappears. They will know when it is almost here by the events that transpire in fulfillment of Scripture. But can this be by the same author who wrote the other letter, 1 Thessalonians? Compare the scenario of Jesus's appearance in 2 Thessalonians, according to which it will be a while yet and preceded by recognizable events, with that of 1 Thessalonians, when the end will come like a "thief in the night," who appears when people least expect it. There seems to be a fundamental disparity between the teachings of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, which is why so many scholars think that 2 Thessalonians is not by Paul.[17]

It is particularly interesting that the author of 2 Thessalonians indicates that he taught his converts all these things already, when he was with them (2:5). If that's the case, then how can one explain 1 Thessalonians? The problem there is that people think the end is supposed to come any day now, based on what Paul told them. But according to 2 Thessalonians Paul never taught any such thing. He taught that a whole sequence of events had to transpire before the end came. Moreover, if that is what he taught them, as 2 Thessalonians insists, then it is passing strange that he never reminds them of this teaching in 1 Thessalonians, where they obviously think that they were taught something else.

Paul probably did not write 2 Thessalonians. That makes one feature of the letter particularly intriguing. At the end of the letter the author insists that he is Paul and gives a kind of proof: "I Paul write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write" (3:17). This means that "Paul" had been dictating his letter to a scribe who had written it all down, until the end, when Paul signed off with his own hand.

Readers of the letter could see the change of handwriting and recognize Paul's, authenticating this letter as really his, as opposed to the forged one mentioned in 2:2. What is peculiar is that the author claims that this is his invariant practice. But it is not how most of the undisputed letters of Paul end, including 1 Thessalonians. The words are hard to account for as Paul's, but they make sense if a forger is trying to convince his readers that he really was Paul. But perhaps the queen doth protest too much.

Some scholars have taken the question of forgery a bit farther and suggested that when the author, claiming to be Paul, tries to soothe his readers not to be led astray by a forged letter ("as if by us,"), which maintains, in Paul's name, that the end is right around the corner, the forger is actually referring to 1 Thessalonians! That is, someone living later wanted to disabuse readers of the message Paul himself had taught about the imminent end, since it did not, after all, come, and Paul and everyone else had died in the meantime. So an author provided some reassurance by forging a letter claiming that the authentic letter was a forgery. Whether or not that is right, what seems relatively certain is that someone after the time of Paul decided that he had to intervene in a situation where people were eagerly anticipating the end, so eagerly, he suggests, that they were neglecting the duties of daily life (3:6–12); he did so by penning a letter in Paul's name, knowing full well that he was someone else living later. Second Thessalonians, then, appears to be another instance of a Pauline forgery.

EPHESIANS

When I was teaching at Rutgers in the mid-1980s, I regularly offered a course on the life and teachings of Paul. One of the textbooks for the course was a book on Paul by the conservative British scholar F. F. Bruce.[18] I used the book because I disagreed

with just about everything in it, and I thought it would be a good idea for my students to see a different side of the story from the one I told in class. One of the things F. F. Bruce thought about the writings of Paul was that Ephesians was the most Pauline of all the Pauline letters. Not only did he think Paul wrote it; he thought it encapsulated better than any other letter the heart and soul of Paul's theology.

That's what I once thought too, years earlier, when I was just starting out in my studies. Then I took a course on the New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary with Professor J. Christiaan Beker. Beker was a formidable scholar of Paul. In the late 1970s he wrote a massive and influential study of Paul's theology, one of the truly great studies ever to be published on the matter.[19] Beker was thoroughly convinced that Paul had not written Ephesians, that in fact Ephesians represents a serious alteration of Paul's thought.[20]

At the time, when I took the course, I wasn't so sure. But the more I studied the matter, carefully comparing what Ephesians says with what Paul himself says in his undisputed letters, I became increasingly convinced. By the time I was teaching at Rutgers, I was sure Paul had not written the letter. Today the majority of biblical scholars agree. Ephesians may sound like Paul, but when you start digging a bit deeper, large differences and discrepancies appear.

Ephesians is written to Gentile Christians (3:1) to remind them that even though they were once alienated from both God and his people, the Jews, they have now been reconciled; they have been made right with God and the boundary that divided Jew from Gentile—the Jewish law—has been torn down by the death of Christ. Jews and Gentiles can now live in harmony with one another, in Christ, and in harmony with God. After laying out this theological set of ideas in the first three chapters (especially chapter 2), the author turns to ethical issues and discusses ways

that followers of Jesus must live in order to manifest the unity they have in Christ.

The reasons for thinking Paul did not write this letter are numerous and compelling. For one thing, the writing style is not Paul's. Paul usually writes in short, pointed sentences; the sentences in Ephesians are long and complex. In Greek, the opening statement of thanksgiving (1:3–14)—all twelve verses—is one sentence. There's nothing wrong with extremely long sentences in Greek; it just isn't the way Paul wrote. It's like Mark Twain and William Faulkner; they both wrote correctly, but you would never mistake the one for the other. Some scholars have pointed out that in the hundred or so sentences in Ephesians, 9 of them are over 50 words in length. Compare this with Paul's own letters. Philippians, for example, has 102 sentences, only 1 of which is over 50 words; Galatians has 181 sentences, again with only 1 over 50 words. The book also has an inordinate number of words that don't otherwise occur in Paul's writings, 116 altogether, well higher than average (50 percent more than Philippians, for example, which is about the same length).[21]

But the main reason for thinking that Paul didn't write Ephesians is that what the author says in places does not jibe with what Paul himself says in his own letters. Ephesians 2:1–10, for example, certainly looks like Paul's writing, but just on the surface. Here, as in Paul's authentic letters, we learn that believers were separated from God because of sin, but have been made right with God exclusively through his grace, not as the result of "works." But here, oddly, Paul includes himself as someone who, before coming to Christ, was carried away by the "passions of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and senses." This doesn't sound like the Paul of the undisputed letters, who says that he had been "blameless" with respect to the "righteousness of the law" (Phil. 3:4). In addition, even though he is talking about the relationship of Jew and Gentile in this letter, the author does not speak about

salvation apart from the "works of the law," as Paul does. He speaks, instead, of salvation apart from doing "good deeds." That simply was not the issue Paul addressed.

Moreover, this author indicates that believers have already been "saved" by the grace of God. As it turns out, the verb "saved" in Paul's authentic letters is always used to refer to the future. Salvation is not something people already have; it's what they *will* have when Jesus returns on the clouds of heaven and delivers his followers from the wrath of God.

Relatedly, and most significantly, Paul was emphatic in his own writings that Christians who had been baptized had "died" to the powers of the world that were aligned with the enemies of God. They had "died with Christ." But they had not yet been "raised" with Christ. That would happen at the end of time, when Jesus returned and all people, living and dead, would be raised up to face judgment. That's why in Romans 6:1–4 Paul is emphatic: those who are baptized "have died" with Christ, and they "will be raised" with him, at Jesus's second coming.

Paul was extremely insistent on this point, that the resurrection of believers was a future, physical event, not something that had already happened. One of the reasons he wrote 1 Corinthians was precisely because some of the Christians in that community took an opposing point of view and maintained that they were already enjoying a resurrected existence with Christ now, that they already were enjoying the benefits of salvation. Paul devotes 1 Corinthians 15 to showing that, no, the resurrection is not something that has happened yet. It is a future physical event yet to occur. Christians have not yet been raised with Christ.

But contrast this statement with what Ephesians says: "Even when we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ…and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places" (2:5–6). Here believers *have* experienced a spiritual resurrection and are enjoying a heavenly

existence in the here and now. This is precisely the view that Paul argued against in his letters to the Corinthians!

In point after point, when you look carefully at Ephesians, it stands at odds with Paul's own work. This book was apparently written by a later Christian in one of Paul's churches who wanted to deal with a big issue of his own day: the relation of Jews and Gentiles in the church. He did so by claiming to be Paul, knowing full well that he wasn't Paul. He accomplished his goal, that is, by producing a forgery.

COLOSSIANS

Much the same can be said about the book of Colossians. On the surface it looks like Paul's work, but not when you dig deeply into it. Colossians has a lot of words and phrases that are found in Ephesians as well, so much so that a number of scholars think that whoever forged Ephesians used Colossians as one of his sources for how Paul wrote. Unfortunately, he used a book that Paul almost certainly did not write.[22]

Colossians has a different agenda and purpose from Ephesians. This author is especially concerned with a group of false teachers who are conveying some kind of "philosophy." Unfortunately the author does not detail what this philosophy entailed and leaves only hints. Evidently the false teachers urged their listeners to worship angels and to follow Jewish laws about what to eat and what special days to keep as religious festivals. One reason the author does not explain in detail what these false teachers taught may be that the people reading the letter knew full well whom he had in mind and what they were saying.

The author opposes them by emphasizing that Christ alone, not angelic beings, is a divinity worthy of worship and that his death put an end to the need to keep the law. In fact, for him, believers in Christ were already above all human rules and

regulations, because they were already raised with Christ in the heavenly places, experiencing some kind of mystical unity with Christ in the here and now. This does not mean, however, that Christians could live just any way they please. They were still responsible for living moral lives. So the final two chapters outline some of the ethical requirements of the new life in Christ.

The reasons for thinking the book was not actually written by Paul are much the same as for Ephesians. Among other things, the writing style and the contents of the book differ significantly from those in the undisputed letters of Paul. Far and away the most compelling study of the writing style of Colossians was done by the German scholar Walter Bujard nearly forty years ago now.[23] Bujard analyzed all sorts of stylistic features of the letter: the kind and frequency of conjunctions, infinitives, participles, relative clauses, strings of genitives, and scores of other things. He was particularly interested in comparing Colossians to Paul's letters that were similar in length: Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians. The differences between this letter and Paul's writings are striking and compelling. Just to give you a taste:

> How often the letter uses "adversative conjunctions" (e.g., "although"): Galatians, 84 times; Philippians, 52; 1 Thessalonians, 29; Colossians, only 8.
>
> How often the letter uses causal conjunctions (e.g., "because"): Galatians, 45 times; Philippians, 20; 1 Thessalonians, 31; Colossians, only 9.
>
> How often the letter uses a conjunction (e.g., "that," "as") to introduce a statement: Galatians, 20 times; Philippians, 19; 1 Thessalonians, 11; Colossians, only 3.

The lists go on for many pages, looking at all sorts of information, with innumerable considerations all pointing in the same

direction: this is someone with a different writing style from Paul's.

And here again, the content of what the author says stands at odds with Paul's own thought, but is in line with Ephesians. Here too, for example, the author indicates that Christians have already been "raised with Christ" when they were baptized, despite Paul's insistence that the believers' resurrection was future, not past (see Col. 2:12–13).

What we have here, then, is another instance in which a later follower of Paul was concerned to address a situation in his own day and did so by assuming the mantle and taking the name of Paul, forging a letter in his name.

Conclusion

WE HAVE SEEN THAT there were a number of Pauline forgeries floating around in the early church, letters claiming to be written by Paul, but in fact written by someone else. Some of these letters are acknowledged as forgeries by everyone on the planet, such as the *Letters of Paul and Seneca,* for example. Others are a matter of serious scholarly discussion. But the majority of scholars acknowledge that, whereas there are seven letters in the New Testament that Paul certainly wrote, six others are probably (or for some scholars, certainly) not by Paul, for some of the reasons I have laid out here. There are plenty more reasons, but the arguments can get a bit dull after a while.

Some scholars, though, have been reluctant to call these deutero-Pauline letters forgeries. Some have argued that they differ from Paul's own letters, because they were given by Paul to a secretary to write, who used a different writing style from Paul's. Others have suggested that since Paul in some of his letters mentions coauthors, possibly these other authors were responsible

for writing the letters, accounting for their differences. And yet others have claimed that it was common in philosophical schools for disciples of a teacher to write treatises and sign them in the name of their teacher, as an act of humility, since all the ideas originated with the teacher himself.

These are all interesting proposals. But I think they are all wrong. I try to show why in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Alternatives to Lies and Deceptions

WHEN I WAS A GOOD conservative evangelical Christian at Moody Bible Institute in my late teen years, I knew for a fact that there could not be any forgeries in the New Testament. My view of Scripture was deeply rooted in Scripture itself and above all in that classic statement of the Bible's own inspiration, 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God [literally, is God-breathed] and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." If Scripture is "breathed out," or inspired, by God, then it obviously cannot have anything wrong in it, let alone anything approaching a lie. In no small measure that is because God himself, who breathed forth the text, does not lie.

For this, we knew all the key verses, including the following:

> God is not a human being, that he should lie. (Num. 23:19)
>
> The Glory of Israel [i.e., God] will not deceive. (1 Sam. 15:29)
>
> In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised...(Titus 1:2)
>
> He guaranteed it by an oath, so that by two unchangeable matters, in which God cannot lie...(Heb. 6:18)

Scripture says that it is inspired or breathed out by God. God does not and cannot lie. Therefore Scripture does not and cannot contain lies. Forgery, on the other hand, involves lying. For that reason there can be no forgeries in the Bible.[1]

This conservative evangelical view is still very much held by some scholars today, at least by conservative evangelical scholars. But I should emphasize it is a view that is built on theological premises of what *has* to be true, not on the grounds of what actually is true.[2] For conservative evangelicals, the Bible has to be without mistake, error, or lie. And if it has to be that way, well then, it is that way!

Can the Bible Contain Lies?

I OBVIOUSLY CHANGED MY view on the matter. Three years after I graduated from Moody, I was studying in a master's program at Princeton Theological Seminary, a mainline Presbyterian school that stresses critical scholarship more than uncritical dogmatism. It was at Princeton Seminary that I came to think that I had previously been approaching the Bible in precisely the wrong way. As a conservative evangelical I had come to the Bible assuming certain things about it even before reading it. I claimed it couldn't have mistakes. And if it couldn't have mistakes, then it obviously didn't have mistakes. Anything that looked like a mistake, therefore, couldn't really be a mistake, because the Bible couldn't have mistakes. And how did I know that the Bible couldn't have mistakes? Not on the basis of any examination or investigation of the Bible, but simply on the basis of what other people had told me, backed up by a few proof texts. I brought the belief in an error-free text to the Bible, and so naturally I found no mistakes, because there couldn't be any.

But why should I have believed this view was true? There were plenty of other Christians who believed other things, especially at a place like Princeton Theological Seminary. It was there that I realized that since the Bible is a book, it makes better sense to approach it the way one approaches books. There are certainly books in the world that don't have any mistakes in them. But no one would insist that a particular phone book, chemistry textbook, or car instruction manual has absolutely no mistakes in it before reading it to see whether it does or not. Rather than thinking that the Bible cannot have mistakes, before looking to see if it does, why not see if it does, and only then decide whether it could?

I know that many evangelical Christians think that this is backwards and wrong, that questioning the Bible is questioning God. But I don't see it that way. If God created an error-free book, then the book should be without errors. If what we have is not an error-free book, then it is not a book that God has delivered to us without errors.

Moreover, as I studied the Bible I began to see the errors, here and there. And then they started to multiply. And eventually they came to involve not just little details, but very big questions and issues of real importance. I came away convinced that the Bible, whatever else it might be, is a very human book.

Human books from the ancient world sometimes contained forgeries, writings that claim to be authored by someone who did not write them. This is certainly true of the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Old Testament. The book of Daniel claims to be written, in part, by the prophet Daniel during the Babylonian captivity in the sixth century BCE. But there is no way it was written then. Scholars for over a hundred years have shown clear and compelling reasons for thinking that it was written four hundred years later, in the second century BCE, by someone falsely claiming to be Daniel. So too the book of Ecclesiastes. The author of

this book does not come out and say his name is Solomon, but he does say that he is the son of David, who is the king in Jerusalem, and that he is fantastically rich and wise. In other words, he is claiming to be Solomon without using his name. But there is no way he was Solomon. This book could not have been written until six hundred years after Solomon's death, as critical biblical scholars today agree.[3]

Whereas there are a couple of forgeries in the Old Testament, there are numerous instances in the New Testament. So far we have considered two books that falsely claim to have been written by Peter and six that falsely claim to have been written by Paul. It is a striking phenomenon that even though scholars far and wide agree that these books were not actually written by their alleged authors, many scholars are reluctant to call the books what they are: literary forgeries meant to deceive their readers. Sometimes I think it is a bit strange that when some scholars refer to books with false authorial claims *outside* the New Testament, they have no qualms calling them "forgeries," but when they refer to such books *within* the New Testament, they call them "pseudepigrapha." Maybe it is better to use the more antiseptic, technical term when dealing with the Bible? Or maybe, instead, it is better to call a spade a spade. We are dealing with precisely the same phenomenon whether a book came to be included in the canon or not.

In this chapter I deal with the ways some scholars have tried to get around the problem that the New Testament contains forgeries. Sometimes they do so with explanations that have become extremely common and widespread, so much so that they sound like common sense to some people. Among other things, it is widely claimed that the practice of making false authorial claims was acceptable in philosophical schools in antiquity and so was excusable for a follower of Peter or Paul. Or it is stated that allegedly pseudepigraphal letters can be explained by thinking that

Peter and Paul used secretaries to produce these writings. As we will see, there is very little evidence to support either view.[4] Before dealing with such explanations, I need to address another point of view often asserted by scholars, that ancient authors who assumed a false identity were not actually trying to be deceitful.

Is Forgery Deceitful?

A Mistaken Scholarly Commonplace

A surprising number of scholars have claimed that even though the Bible may contain forgeries, these forgeries were never meant to deceive anyone. According to this view, ancient authors who assumed a false name were not trying to lead their readers astray. They were not lying, they were not being deceitful, and they were not condemned.

It is hard to understand how anyone who has actually read any of the ancient discussions of forgery can make such claims. But this view is so widespread that it has become a complete commonplace in New Testament scholarship. Let me give several examples of scholars who make statements of this sort, along with some interspersed comments, before emphasizing just how wrong this view is.

One highly respected author of the 1920s, in a classical study of the pastoral letters, claimed that the author, who called himself Paul even though he was someone else, "was not conscious of misrepresenting the Apostle in any way; he was not consciously deceiving anybody; it is not, indeed, necessary to suppose that he did deceive anybody."[5] What evidence does this scholar provide for these claims? None at all. And what a remarkable statement! If the author did not want to deceive anyone and in fact did not deceive anybody, why is it that every known interpreter of these

letters for over seventeen hundred years was deceived, as many continue to be today, when they assume that the author who claims to be Paul really was Paul?

Or consider the statement of an author from the 1970s who tells us: "Pseudonymity was a frequent feature in early literature. There was nothing immoral about it; it was simply the equivalent of modern anonymity. It was a mark of humility; the author, being too diffident to write under his own name, took shelter under a better-known name."[6] This author is at least right about one thing: forgery is frequent in ancient literature. But is it like "modern anonymity"? This is a rather odd thing to say about the practice. Why not say it is like "ancient" anonymity? Books were written anonymously in the ancient world as well as in the modern one, more often in fact. But this raises an enormous question that this scholar can't answer. If an author who was writing out of humility did not want to mention his own name, why didn't he simply write anonymously? Why did he attach a false name to his work, misrepresenting himself as someone else?

Or take this comment from a scholar writing in the 1990s about the pseudonymous authorship of 2 Thessalonians: "This kind of pseudonymity should not be labeled as 'forgery.' This latter qualification implies a negative moral judgment, and we shall see that in all probability the author of 2 Thessalonians, and the authors of comparable pseudonymous documents, did not consider their writings as products of fraud. We should try to assess such writings by the standards that were accepted in the environment in which they originated."[7] This sounds like a sensible approach indeed, to evaluate the writings by ancient rather than modern standards. But this scholar never does so. He never looks at what ancient people called this practice or considers what they had to say about it. It is important to remember what ancient people called "this kind of pseudonymity"—they called books like this "falsely inscribed writings," "lies," and "bastards"!

Representative of this same line of thought is the work of a recent scholar who is dealing with the fact that the author of Ephesians falsely claimed to be Paul. This scholar states that such a false claim "was a widespread and accepted literary practice in both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures.... There is no reason to think of the device of pseudonymity in negative terms and to associate it necessarily with such notions as forgery and deception."[8] Once again, critical readers want to know what *evidence* the author cites that the practice was "accepted" and that it was not associated with "forgery and deception." But he cites none. Why? Either because the author—even though he's an otherwise reputable New Testament scholar—is not familiar with what ancient people actually said about forgery or because he doesn't dare cite what they said, since what they said runs counter to what he says.

Other scholars have allowed their theological views to cloud their historical judgment. Consider one of the most recent commentators on Colossians, who sees the work as a forgery, but maintains it is an "honest forgery" (as opposed to a dishonest one):

> The evidence from the ancient world makes it necessary to distinguish dishonest forgery, undertaken for nefarious and malicious ends, and what might be described, paradoxical as it may appear, as honest forgery.... It should be emphasized once again that the last option [that Colossians was not written by Paul] does not necessarily carry with it the stigma of fraud or forgery. That might apply in the case of a work written to propound some heretical doctrine, and as noted above many such works were later to be stigmatized as apocryphal or heretical, and therefore rejected. In the case of New Testament pseudepigrapha, however, the situation is somewhat different: these works

> came to be recognized by the Church as valid and authentic witnesses to the genuine Christian faith.... They witness to what the Church believed.[9]

In other words, if later, second-, third-, or fourth-century orthodox Christians agreed with the views found in the book of Colossians and decided that it should be included in the Bible, then its author was an honest forger. Other authors, however, who espoused views that later Christians rejected, were dishonest forgers. And how would the authors themselves know that centuries later their views would be accepted or not? Well, obviously, they'd have no way of knowing. So their honesty or dishonesty is rooted in circumstances completely outside of their own control.[10]

An Alternative Perspective

All of the scholars I have just quoted have three things in common. All of them maintain that what I'm calling forgery—the claim of an author to be someone other than who he really is—was not a deceptive practice; all of them base their views on statements to that effect by earlier scholars rather than on an examination of the ancient sources; and all of them choose not to provide a single stitch of evidence.

That these views are wrong should be clear even from my brief examination of the ancient evidence in Chapter 1. If forgery was never thought of as wrong, why is it that in every known instance of a person being caught he is either reprimanded, abused, or punished? And if the purpose was not to deceive readers, what exactly was the purpose?

Just consider the motivations that drove authors to claim to be someone else. Some forgers did it to see if they could get away with it. Well, if no one was deceived, then how would they get

away with it? Some did it to make money. But if no one was fooled, who would pay the money? Others used forgery to cast aspersions on the character of another, the person who allegedly wrote the text. But if readers knew that the alleged author wasn't the real author, how could this tactic possibly work? Some authors forged documents for military or political ends, to convince people in the name of an authority to engage in some kind of violent action or coup. But what would be convincing if the authority turned out not to be the person he claimed to be? Other forgers, probably the majority among Christians, produced their work in the name of someone else in order to make sure that their views would get a wide circulation. But if it was *known* that the alleged author didn't actually write the book—if it *wasn't* really written by Plato or Peter or Paul—why would anyone bother to read the book?

You can go through all the motivations I have documented from the ancient sources. None of them makes sense if the forgery didn't "work," that is, if no one was fooled. And as I've said, the fact that people were fooled can explain the negative and sometimes violent reactions by readers who realized they had been fooled.

This is why there is another set of scholars who talk about forgery and call it what it is—an intentional deceit. These other scholars have actually read what ancient sources say about the practice. My own teacher, Bruce M. Metzger, who knew the ancient sources like the back of his hand, asked the rhetorical question of the first group of scholars I mentioned: "How can it be so confidently known that such productions 'would deceive no one'? Indeed, if nobody was taken in by the device of pseudepigraphy, it is difficult to see why it was adopted at all."[11]

One of the finest German scholars to discuss forgery in the ancient world, Norbert Brox, after having surveyed all the ancient discussions, states explicitly: "Contemporary scholarship on

forgery shows beyond any doubt that literary forgery even at that time raised the question of its own morality and was not at all tolerated as a common, purely routine and acceptable practice."[12] And the leading authority of forgery in modern times, the Austrian scholar Wolfgang Speyer, indicates plainly at the very beginning of his massive study of the phenomenon: "Every kind of forgery misrepresents the facts of the case, and to that extent forgery belongs in the realm of lying and deception."[13]

Pseudepigraphy as an Accepted Practice

OTHER SCHOLARS WHO DO not want their readers to think badly about forgeries (especially the ones in the Bible) do more than simply make blanket statements that forgers were not being deceitful. These other scholars, instead, give reasons and special circumstances under which the use of a false name was an acceptable practice in antiquity. Scholars who do so can be grouped into three major schools of thought.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHY IN THE SPIRIT

One view that was popular among scholars for years was that when an early Christian author wrote a book in someone else's name, it was because he had been inspired to do so by the Spirit of God. When stated baldly, this sounds very much like a theological claim (and possibly not a very good one); but it is not necessarily that. You do not have to think that the Holy Spirit literally inspired a person to write this way; you could simply think that the person *believed* he was moved by the Spirit to write in the name of an early Christian authority. For this person who believed he was inspired, the words he wrote came from an impeccable authority (e.g., an apostle).

One of the chief proponents of this view was the German scholar Kurt Aland, who claimed that the earliest Christian "prophets" believed they were inspired by the Spirit and so spoke forth a kind of "prophetic word" whose authority was not themselves, but the Holy Spirit. Eventually Christian "authorities" began writing down these prophetic words. But an author could not write in his own name, as if his personal authority could back up an idea or words provided by the Spirit. The author, instead, was a kind of tool used by the Spirit (in the author's belief) to convey its own message. Aland claimed:

> Not only was the tool [i.e., the human author] by which the message was given irrelevant, but…it would have amounted to a falsification even to name this tool, because…it was not the author of the writing who really spoke, but only the authentic witness, the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the apostles.

As a result:

> When pseudonymous writings of the NT claimed the authorship of the most prominent apostles only, this was not a skillful trick of the so-called fakers, in order to guarantee the highest possible reputation and the widest possible circulation for their work, but the logical conclusion of the presupposition that the Spirit himself was the author.[14]

Despite the one-time popularity of this view among some scholars, it has never really caught on widely. For one thing, it doesn't make sense to say that in the earliest Christian tradition authors refused to use their names, because it was the Spirit who was speaking through them. Our very first author was Paul, and he uses his own name.

Second, if authors wanted to claim that it was the Spirit speaking through them, that is, that they were not grounding their message on their own authority, why wouldn't they simply say, "Thus says the Lord," or "Thus says the Spirit"? Why would they claim to be some other human—Peter, or Paul, or James—knowing full well that was not who they were? That is to say, this view can explain early *anonymous* writings, but it doesn't explain the one thing that it is trying to explain: early *pseudonymous* writings. In particular, it doesn't explain why an author would falsely claim one name instead of another for himself. If it was the Spirit that inspired the writer, why would he call himself Peter? Why not John, or Paul, or James? Or, as I suggested, why not give no name at all? As a result, this explanation, although interesting, is simply not convincing.

Reactualizing the Tradition

The next explanation of how pseudepigraphal authorship could be seen as an acceptable practice is a bit more complicated. In a nutshell, it argues that if an author understood himself to be a later representative of points of view held by a famous earlier author (who since had died, for example), he could write a document in that person's name. The purpose was not to claim that he really was that person, but to suggest that the views represented in the document were those of this older authority. Or at least they would be that authority's views, if he were still living to deal with the new situation that had arisen since his death.

A technical term for this kind of procedure is "reactualizing the tradition." A "tradition" is any point of view, teaching, or story that is passed down in writing or by word of mouth. A tradition is "reactualized" when it is made actively relevant (reactuated) to a new situation.

Suppose a highly influential author in 1917 condemned Christians who drank alcohol, on the grounds that doing so made them leave their senses and behave irresponsibly. Fifty years later, a different problem has arisen—people have started using hallucinogenic drugs. A new author wants to tell Christians that they are not to do any such thing. The new author, living in 1967, writes an essay claiming to be the famous and respected author from 1917, condemning not just alcohol consumption, but also the use of drugs. This new author stands in the tradition of the older author and makes the tradition applicable to the "actual" situation he is addressing. In other words, he has "reactualized" the tradition. By claiming the name of the author from 1917, he is not so much claiming to *be* that person as to be *continuing the tradition* of that person.

That at least is the theory, and it has been applied by some scholars to the phenomenon of pseudepigraphy in the New Testament. As one British scholar has argued, pseudonymity was "an acceptable practice, not intended to deceive," because a pseudepigraphal author continuing an older author's tradition "could present his message as the message of the originator of that stream of tradition, because in his eyes that is what it was.... There was no intention to deceive, and almost certainly the final readers were not in fact deceived."[15]

You can probably see one of the key problems with this view. If the people who forged the New Testament letters of, say, Peter and Paul had no "intention to deceive" and did "not in fact" deceive anyone, we again are left with the problem of why everyone (for many, many centuries) was in fact deceived. For seventeen hundred years, everyone who read these letters thought that Peter and Paul wrote them. And here again we're left with the question: What is the *evidence* that "reactualizing the tradition" by assuming a false name was a widely followed and acceptable practice?

The chief proponent of this view is the American scholar David Meade, who published his Ph.D. dissertation on the topic.[16] Meade argues that the evidence for this practice comes from the Hebrew Bible. It was customary, he says, for writings of various authors to be passed along under the name of the person who started the tradition that they saw themselves belonging to. For example, Hebrew Bible scholars for over a century have maintained that the book of Isaiah was not composed completely by the famous Isaiah of Jerusalem in the eighth century BCE. Chapters 40–55, for example, were almost certainly written by someone else living a hundred and fifty years later, during the time when the nation of Judah was in captivity in Babylon.

As Meade notes, Isaiah 40–55 was transmitted as part of the book of Isaiah. But, in Meade's view, the author of these chapters was not trying to deceive anyone into thinking he was really Isaiah of Jerusalem, from a century and a half earlier. Meade argues that he was simply claiming to belong to the same prophetic tradition as Isaiah of Jerusalem. So too the final eleven chapters of Isaiah, which were written by yet a third author, living even later. As Meade puts it, by calling these later authors "Isaiah" Jews were not making a claim about the "literary origins" of their writing (i.e., about who originally penned their books), but about their "authoritative tradition" (i.e., about which tradition—Isaiah's—they were continuing on for the new day.)

Meade finds this kind of tradition in other parts of the Hebrew Bible as well and so concludes that, when it comes to the New Testament, authors are doing something very similar. The author of 2 Peter, who was not really Peter, claims to be Peter not because he wants people to think he is Peter. He is not meaning to lie about it. He is indicating which tradition—Peter's—he sees himself belonging to.

A number of scholars have been attracted to this theory, since it can explain how authors could make false claims about

themselves without lying about it, and it seems to fit into the ancient Jewish tradition of authorship. But there are very big problems with the theory.

For one thing, most of the evidence doesn't actually work. We're not sure who wrote Isaiah 40–55, other than to say that, first, it was not Isaiah of Jerusalem and, second, it was probably an Israelite living during the Babylonian captivity. We don't know if he himself physically added his own writings to the writings of Isaiah of Jerusalem (e.g., on the same scroll) or if he simply wrote his book using many of the ideas of his predecessor. That is to say, it may be that it was someone else who put the two bits of writing together, so that the author of what is now Isaiah 40–55 wasn't making any authorial claim at all, but was simply writing anonymously. Moreover, nowhere does the author of Isaiah 40–55 ever claim to be Isaiah. This is in stark contrast with, say, the author of 2 Peter, who claims to be Peter, or with the author of Ephesians, who claims to be Paul.

But even more problematic is the fact that writers of the first century, when the New Testament books were being written, did not *know* that Isaiah 40–55 was not written by Isaiah of Jerusalem. Quite the contrary, it was widely assumed that Isaiah wrote all of Isaiah! This notion that later authors were reactualizing the tradition is based on twentieth-century views of authorship of the Hebrew Bible that no one in the ancient world knew about. There is no record of anyone from the ancient world ever acknowledging this view, speaking about this view, reflecting on this view, embracing this view, supporting this view, or promoting this view. No ancient author even *mentions* this view. How would a first-century person such as the author of Colossians have any idea what had happened with the writings of Isaiah five hundred years earlier? He was living in a different country and speaking a different language; he was not a Jew himself; he read Isaiah in

Greek rather than Hebrew; and for him all of Isaiah was written by Isaiah.

There is a yet another problem with this view. Even if it were true that the author of 2 Peter understood himself to be continuing the tradition of Peter, would that justify his claim to *be* Peter? What is the logic of claiming actually to be the person whose views you accept? One of the reasons this logic is faulty is that there were lots of Christians representing lots of points of view, many of which were at odds with one another. How would proponents of a tradition have reacted toward others who claimed to be from that *same* tradition, yet had something different to say? Just think of the author of the Pastorals, who claimed to be Paul even though he wasn't, and the author of the *Acts of Paul,* who claimed to be representing Paul's proclamation even though he wasn't. They have just the opposite views of women and their roles in the church. Should we think, then, that early Christians who accepted the view of the Pastorals would find it acceptable for the author of the *Acts of Paul* to put words into Paul's mouth that he didn't speak? Of course not. Would the author of the *Acts of Paul* find it acceptable for the author of the Pastorals actually to claim to be Paul, when he wasn't? Absolutely not. What would each of these authors have called the other? They would have called the other author a liar. And they would have labeled the other author's books *pseuda* (falsehoods, lies) and *notha* (bastards).

Philosophical Schools

One other reason Meade's explanation of forgery fails is that most of the authors of the New Testament were not part of the Jewish tradition. They were Gentiles. So other scholars have tried to find grounds for legitimizing pseudepigraphal writings in the pagan tradition, where these authors have their roots. Such

scholars sometimes claim that it was common for disciples of a philosopher to write treatises and not sign their own name, but the name of their teacher. This, it is alleged, was done as an act of humility, that authors felt that their ideas were not actually theirs, but had been given to them by the leader of their philosophical school. So, to give credit where credit was due, they attached their master's name to their own writings.

New Testament scholars often claim that this can explain why someone claimed to be Paul when writing Colossians, Ephesians, or the pastoral letters. In one of the standard commentaries on Colossians, for example, we read the following: "Pseudonymous documents, especially letters with philosophical content, were set in circulation because disciples of a great man intended to express, by imitation, their adoration of their revered master and to secure or to promote his influence upon a later generation under changed circumstances."[17] A more recent commentator on Colossians and Ephesians states something similar: "Viewing Colossians (or Ephesians) as deutero-Pauline should not be mistakenly understood as meaning that these documents are simply examples of forgery. For example, to write in the name of a philosopher who was one's patron could be seen as a sign of honor bestowed upon that person."[18]

I should point out that, as happens so often, neither of these commentators actually provides any evidence that this was a common practice in philosophical schools. They state it as a fact. And why do they think it's a fact? For most New Testament scholars it is thought to be a fact because, well, so many New Testament scholars have said so! But ask someone who makes this claim what her ancient source of information is or what ancient philosopher actually states that this was a common practice. More often than not you'll be met with a blank stare.

The scholars who do mention ancient evidence for this alleged practice typically point to two major sources.[19] But one of the

two says no such thing. This is the third-century Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry, who is alleged to have said that in the school of the ancient philosopher Pythagoras (who lived eight hundred years earlier) it was a common practice for disciples to write books and sign their master's name to them.[20] This statement by Porphyry is a little hard to track down, because it is not in his surviving Greek writings; it is only in an Arabic translation of one of his works from the thirteenth century.[21]

I doubt if any of the New Testament scholars who refer to this statement of Porphyry's has actually read it, since it is, after all, in Arabic, and most New Testament scholars don't read Arabic. I don't either. But I have a colleague who does, Carl Ernst, an expert in medieval Islam. I asked Professor Ernst to translate the passage for me. As it turns out, Porphyry doesn't say anything about followers of Pythagoras writing books and then signing his name to them. Instead, he says that Pythagoras himself wrote eighty books, two hundred books were written by his followers, and twelve books were "forged" in the name of Pythagoras. The twelve books are condemned for using Pythagoras's name when he didn't write them. The forgers are called "shameless people" who "fabricated" "false books." The two hundred books are not said to have been written by Pythagoras's followers in his name; they were simply books written by Pythagoras's followers.

This, then, is one of the two ancient references sometimes cited by scholars to indicate that the practice of writing in a master's name was "common." I should point out that, in Porphyry's other writings as well as in this passage, he shows a keen interest in knowing which books are authentic and which are forged, and he condemns the forgeries, including the Old Testament book of Daniel, which he thinks could not have been written by an Israelite in the sixth century BCE.

The other reference to a tradition in the philosophical schools does say what scholars have said it says. This one is in the

writings of Iamblichus, another Neoplatonic philosopher from about the same time as Porphyry. In his account of Pythagoras's life, Iamblichus says the following: "This also is a beautiful circumstance, that they [i.e., Pythagoras's followers] referred everything to Pythagoras, and called it by his name, and that they did not ascribe to themselves the glory of their own inventions, except very rarely. For there are very few whose works are acknowledged to be their own."[22]

There are lots of problems with taking this one statement as an indication of what "typically" happened in the philosophical schools of antiquity as a model for what the Christian authors did when claiming to be Peter, Paul, James, Thomas, Philip, and others:

1. For this tradition to have made an impact on such a wide array of early Christian authors, it would have had to be widely known. But it wasn't. The tradition is not mentioned by a single author from the time of Pythagoras (sixth century BCE) to the time of Iamblichus (third to fourth century CE). As a result, there is nothing to suggest this view was widely known. Quite the contrary, no one else seems to have known it for eight hundred years.

2. More specifically, Iamblichus was living two hundred years after the writings of 1 and 2 Peter and the Deutero-Paulines. There is no reference to this tradition existing in the time of the New Testament writings. It could scarcely have been seen as a widely accepted practice at the time.

3. Iamblichus refers to what happened only within one of the many philosophical schools. He makes no claims about a wider tradition in philosophical schools outside of Pythagorean circles.

4. As recent scholars of Pythagoreanism have pointed out, there is reason to think that what Iamblichus says in fact is not even true of the Pythagorean school:[23]

a. First, he was writing eight hundred years after Pythagoras and would have had no way of knowing that what he was saying is true. He may well simply have thought this is how it worked.

b. None of the other philosophers or historians who talk about Pythagoras and his school prior to Iamblichus says any such thing about pseudonymous works written in his name.

c. Iamblichus's comment is completely casual and off the cuff.

d. To cap it all off, when Iamblichus's statement can be checked, it appears to be wrong. The vast majority of the writings of the Pythagorean school were not done in the name of Pythagoras. His followers wrote in their own names.[24]

As a result, the brief and casual comment by Iamblichus (who, it must be remembered, lived more than two hundred years after Paul and Peter) cannot at all be taken as evidence of what happened in the days of Pythagoras and his students (six hundred years before Paul and Peter), let alone what happened commonly in the philosophical schools, let alone what probably happened in early Christianity.[25]

For these reasons, New Testament scholars need to revise their views about philosophical schools and their impact on the forgery practices of early Christians. There is almost nothing to suggest that there was a tradition in these schools to practice pseudepigraphy as an act of humility. I would suggest that

scholars have latched onto this idea simply because it gives them a way of talking about what happened in the literary tradition of early Christianity without saying that early Christian authors were guilty of forgery.

The Secretary Hypothesis

THE THREE GROUPS OF scholars I have mentioned all think that under certain conditions pseudepigraphy was an acceptable practice in antiquity. For that reason, in these scholars' opinion, the authors of early Christian writings should not be thought of as lying when they claimed to be someone other than who they were. There is one other school of thought to consider, one that says that in a number of cases what *appears* to be forgery in fact is not. The scholars who argue this are not claiming, on theological grounds, that there could be no such thing as forgery in early Christianity. They are claiming, on historical grounds, that some books that appear to be pseudonymous in fact are not. That is because the real author, who actually was who he claimed to be, used a secretary, and the secretary wrote in a different style from the author himself. Sometimes the real author may have dictated a letter word for word to a secretary. But other times he may have asked his secretary to rework his letter to improve the style. At still other times an author may have simply told a secretary to write a letter for him, so that both the contents and the style of the letter are the secretary's, even if the ultimate "authority" for the letter is the author who is named.

This is a very popular theory; you will find it expressed everywhere in biblical commentaries on the deutero-Pauline and Petrine letters. It explains why 1 Peter seems to have a different writing style from 2 Peter. It explains why the views of the disputed "Pauline" letter of Ephesians seem to differ so radically

from the views of the undisputed letter to the Romans. Virtually all of the problems with what I've been calling forgeries can be solved if secretaries were heavily involved in the composition of the early Christian writings. Despite the popularity of this theory, I am going to argue, once again, that it simply does not have credible evidence to back it up.

Whole books have been devoted to the question in recent years. The fullest and most exhaustive is by E. Randolph Richards, called *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*.[26] Richards looks at all the evidence for secretaries in the ancient world. He diligently peruses the letters of the most famous letter writer of Rome, the statesman and philosopher Cicero. For most of these letters Cicero used secretaries. Richards considers all the other great figures of the empire known to have used secretaries (Brutus, Pompey, and Marcus Aurelius, for example). He looks at every reference to secretaries he can find in the ancient letters that still survive on papyrus, most of which have been discovered in Egypt over the course of the past century. And he considers what early Christian sources themselves have to say about letters and secretaries. It is a full and very useful study.

There is no doubt that the apostle Paul used a secretary on occasion. One of his secretaries tells us that he has written the letter! In Romans 16:22 we read, "I Tertius, the one who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord." Tertius does not mean to say that he was the "author" of the letter. He was the scribe who wrote what Paul told him to write. Paul also used a scribe for his letter to the Galatians, since at the very end he tells his readers, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" (6:11). Commentators are widely agreed that Paul had dictated the letter to a secretary, but here at the end he was writing the final bit himself. He used larger handwriting either because he wasn't as skilled at writing as the secretary, because he had

problems with his eyesight and so wrote larger letters, or for some other reason.

Did Paul use a secretary for all of his letters? It is impossible to say. Did the secretaries contribute to the contents of the letter? This is easier to say. Despite what scholars often claim, all of the evidence we have suggests that the answer is no. The same evidence applies to the authors of 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and in fact to all the other early Christian writers.

In his study Richards argues that secretaries were used in four distinct ways for the writing of letters. Most of the time a secretary simply recorded what the author dictated to him, either slowly, syllable by syllable; in some kind of shorthand while the author spoke at natural speed; or something in between. Other times a secretary was asked by an author to correct the grammar and improve the style of what the author either wrote or dictated. On occasion, Richards claims, a secretary was a kind of coauthor who contributed his own thoughts and ideas to a letter. And sometimes, Richards states, a secretary actually composed an entire letter on behalf of the author, so that all the words and thoughts were actually the secretary's, even if the author signed off on what he had written.

If secretaries actually did commonly, or at least occasionally, work in these latter ways, then it would make sense that different letters by the same "author" might read very differently from one another not just in writing style, but in content. So what is the evidence that it worked this way?

There is no doubt about Richards's first category. There is abundant evidence—you can read it all in Richards's study—that authors often dictated letters instead of writing them out themselves. When that happened, the author was really the author. He didn't himself put pen to papyrus, but the thoughts are his thoughts, the words are his words, the grammar is his grammar. No problems there.

It is with the other three categories that we begin to have problems. One very severe problem is the nature of our evidence. Virtually all of it comes from authors who were very, very wealthy and powerful and inordinately well educated. These were the very upper class, the highest tier of the cultured elite: emperors, consuls, and senators. It is a genuine question how relevant that evidence is for people who were of the lower classes, who may have been moderately well educated, which would put them way ahead of most people of course, but far below a Cicero or a Marcus Aurelius. The papyri—that is, the surviving private letters that were written by regular folk instead of the elite of society—do not give us any help in knowing about these other three categories.

Another problem has to do with the nature of the "letters" involved. Most letters in the Greco-Roman world were very short and to the point. They were one page or less. They had very limited content. Most commonly the author would say who he was, indicate to whom he was writing, offer a brief thanks to the gods for the recipient, indicate his information or his request, and then sign off. Bam-bam-bam and done.

The reason this is a "problem" is that the letters of early Christianity that we are concerned about—the letter to the Ephesians, for example, or 1 Peter—are not like that at all. They are lengthy treatises that deal with large and complex issues in the form of a letter. They do have the stylistic features of ancient letters: the names of the author and the recipient, a thanksgiving, the body of the letter, and the closing. But they are so much more extensive than typical letters, for example, in their theological expositions, ethical exhortations, and quotation of and interpretation of Scripture. These New Testament "letters" are really more like essays put in letter form. So evidence that derives from the brief, stereotyped letters typically found in Greek and Roman

circles is not necessarily germane to the "letters" of the early Christians.

With these caveats in mind, what can we say about the three other categories that Richards lays out, secretaries who improve an author's style, who coauthor a letter, or who compose a letter? There is some evidence, though it is very limited, that secretaries occasionally were asked to improve the author's style. The evidence is all from the very top echelons of the upper class of ancient Rome, a letter from the military commander Brutus and another from the emperor Marcus Aurelius, for example. It is difficult to know whether this procedure was used widely, or at all, outside of the circles of the ultrarich landed aristocracy.

The evidence of the other types of letters—at least as cited by Richards—is virtually nonexistent, as he himself says. When talking about the possibility that some letters were coauthored by both the author and his secretary, Richards points to one possible example, letters written by Cicero and his secretary Tiro. But Richards then discounts the suggestion that Tiro coauthored the letters with Cicero and shows why the suggestion is probably wrong. Remarkably this is the one and only example that Richards mentions before concluding, "Evidently then…secretaries were used as coauthors"! It is hard to see what makes this "evident" when he hasn't cited a single instance of it. Maybe other scholars (or Richards himself) will eventually be able to find some evidence.

There is a similar problem with the idea that secretaries sometimes composed letters themselves for someone else. It is true that illiterate persons sometimes required the services of a scribal secretary to draw up a land deed, marriage certificate, sales receipt, or some other document, and that they occasionally (but rarely) used scribal secretaries to write brief stereotyped letters. Even the upper classes would sometimes instruct a secretary to spin off a quick stereotyped letter for them to someone, as is

evidenced on several occasions by Cicero. So far as Richards's evidence goes, it is only Cicero who did this, no one else. But drafting a brief stereotyped letter is completely different from composing a long, detailed, finely argued, carefully reasoned, and nuanced letter like 1 Peter or Ephesians. What evidence is there that essay-letters of that sort were ever handed over to a secretary to be composed? There is absolutely no evidence that I know of.

Richards hasn't seen any evidence of it either. When Cicero asked a secretary to compose a quick stereotyped letter for him and make it look as if it came from him, Cicero, he was doing what no other person is known to have done in antiquity. As Richards himself says: "It is tempting to conclude that an author-initiated request for deception was rare indeed, perhaps singularly restricted to Cicero and to this time in his life" (i.e., when he was old, tired, and unwilling to write a letter himself).[27]

What about other secretaries who may have composed a letter (not even a letter-essay) for another author? Again, according to Richards: "Nowhere was there *any* indication that an ordinary secretary was asked, much less presumed, to compose a letter for the author." On the contrary, "without an explicit reference to the use of a secretary as a composer of a letter, this secretarial method probably should not even be considered a valid option."[28] There is certainly no such explicit reference in the deutero-Pauline or Petrine letters.

I don't know of a single piece of evidence or a single analogy to suggest that Peter or Paul used a secretary who significantly—or insignificantly, for that matter—added to the contents of the letter. That is why it is important to consider not only the style of writing, but also the contents when considering whether Paul did or did not write, say, Ephesians or 1 Timothy, or that Peter did or did not write 1 or 2 Peter. When a person claimed to write a letter, he was owning up to the contents. Sometimes a

letter attributed to Paul is at odds with what Paul says elsewhere, as when Ephesians differs from Paul's view of the resurrection of believers as found in his letter to the Romans. Since secretaries did not produce the contents of letters (at least letter-essays of this sort), a secretary could not be responsible for the difference. So Paul is probably in no way responsible for the disputed letter. Other times what one finds in a letter cannot be plausibly explained as coming from the reputed author. Whoever wrote 1 Peter, for example, was a highly educated Greek-speaking Christian who understood how to use Greek rhetorical devices and could cite the Greek Old Testament with flair and nuance. That does not apply to the uneducated, illiterate, Aramaic-speaking fisherman from rural Galilee, and it does not appear to have been produced by a secretary acting on his behalf.

As I pointed out in Chapter 2, it also helps to think concretely about how the secretary hypothesis might explain how Peter himself could have written 1 Peter. He could not have dictated the letter to a secretary, because he was not trained in Greek compositional and rhetorical techniques. Nor could he have dictated the letter in Aramaic and asked the secretary to translate it into Greek, because the letter contains sophisticated forms of argumentation and presentation that work only in Greek and presupposes knowledge of the Greek Old Testament, not the Hebrew version, which Peter himself would have been familiar with. And it does not seem possible that Peter gave the general gist of what he wanted to say and that a secretary then created the letter for him in his name, since, first, then the secretary rather than Peter would be the real author of the letter, and second, and even more important, we don't seem to have any analogy for a procedure like this from the ancient world.

Historians have to decide what probably happened in the past. Which is more probable—a scenario that does not have any known analogy (Peter asking someone else to write the treatise in

his name) or a scenario that has lots and lots of analogies, since it happened all the time? Forgeries happened all the time. Surely that's the best explanation for what is going on here.

The same applies to the letters bearing Paul's name that he did not write, in which the contents, not just the style, differ significantly from the views of Paul himself. These letters were not produced by secretaries. They were produced by later Christian authors claiming to be Paul. As a result, the secretary hypothesis, as promising as it looks at first glance, simply can't explain away the forgeries of the New Testament.

Conclusion

I CAN WRAP UP these first four chapters by making a series of summary statements. There were a large number of literary forgeries in early Christianity, some of which may be found in the New Testament. These really are forgeries, books whose authors claim to be well-known authority figures, even though they were someone else. Some scholars today avoid the term "forgery" and call these writings pseudonymous or pseudepigraphal; technically speaking, these other terms are correct, but they are imprecise. Pseudonymous writings include writings produced under a pen name, and none of the writings we have been considering fall into that category. Pseudepigraphal writings include originally anonymous writings that were later wrongly attributed to well-known figures. The books we are talking about are by authors who lied about their identity in order to deceive their readers into thinking that they were someone they were not. The technical term for this kind of activity is forgery.

Forgery in antiquity was different from forgery today in some important respects, and these differences need to be constantly borne in mind. Most important, in the modern day, forgery

connotes an illegal activity that can land a person in jail. In the ancient world there were no laws against such things, and so the practice should not be thought of as illegal. But this difference is not significant enough to require us to use a different term for the practice. “Books” in the ancient world, for example, were quite different from books today. They were written on scrolls and were not mass produced. Still, that doesn’t stop anyone from calling them books. Forgeries in the ancient world were different in some ways from forgeries today, but they were still forgeries.

The negative connotations of the term are appropriate to the ancient phenomenon. Ancient authors called such works falsely inscribed writings, lies, and “illegitimate children.” Multiple attempts by modern scholars to see the practice in a more positive light simply don’t stand up to scrutiny. The most common claims found widely, both among scholars and laypeople, are that this practice was widely accepted in philosophical schools or that the phenomenon can be explained by assuming that an author made use of a secretary who composed the writing himself. Neither explanation has adequate support in the ancient sources.

It is important to recall that ancient writers who mention the practice of forgery consistently condemn it and indicate that it is deceitful, inappropriate, and wrong. If we are to do so as well probably depends on a number of factors. Modern readers who are religiously committed to the teachings of the New Testament may want to excuse the authors who deceived their readers about their identity, on the grounds, for example, that they were lying in order to achieve a greater good. Other readers may be inclined to acknowledge that the authors violated ancient ethical standards and are best described as I have done so here—as forgers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Forgeries in Conflicts with Jews and Pagans

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, JESUS is reputed to have said, "I did not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). Truer words were never spoken. Many Christians in the modern age think of their religion as peace loving, as well it often has been and should be. But anyone with any grasp of history at all knows also just how violent Christians have been over the ages, sponsoring oppression, injustice, wars, crusades, pogroms, inquisitions, holocausts—all in the name of the faith. Maybe all the Christians behind history's hateful acts were acting in bad faith; maybe they were violating the true principles of their own religion; maybe they were out of touch with the peace-loving teachings of the Good Shepherd of the sheep. And no one should deny the amazing good that has been done in the name of Christ, the countless acts of selfless love, the mind-boggling sacrifices made to help those in need. Even so, few religions in the history of the human race have shown a greater penchant for conflict than the religion founded on the teachings of Jesus, who, true to his word, did indeed bring a sword.

Some early Christians realized that the religion would be based on conflict. The author of the New Testament book of Ephesians, allegedly Paul, tells his readers to "put on the full armor of God" (6:10–20). Their struggle was not against mortal flesh, but "against authorities, against the cosmic power of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly

places." Against these cosmic enemies Christian believers were to put on the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This was not a battle, then, against human enemies, but against the spiritual powers arrayed against God. But it was a battle nonetheless.

It is striking that in his instructions about the Christian "armor" the author of Ephesians also tells his readers, "Fasten the belt of truth around your waist" (6:14). Truth was important for this writer. Early on he refers to the gospel as "the word of truth" (1:13). He later indicates that the "truth is in Jesus" and tells his readers to "speak the truth" to their neighbors (4:24–25). He also claims that the "fruit of the light" is found in "truth" (5:9). How ironic, then, that the author has deceived his readers about his own identity. The book was written pseudonymously in the name of Paul by someone who knew full well that he was not Paul. Falsely claiming to be an impeccable Christian authority, this advocate for truth produced a pseudepigraphon, a "falsely inscribed writing." At least that is what ancient critics would have called it, had they known the author was not Paul. So some Christians went into battle armed not with truth, but with deception. Possibly the author felt justified in lying about his identity. There was, after all, a lot at stake.

Christians entered into conflict not merely with spiritual forces, but also with human ones. Or, perhaps more accurately from the author's point of view, the spiritual forces aligned against Christians manifested themselves in the human sphere, and it was on this level that the battles were actually fought. As historians of early Christianity have long known, Christians in the early centuries of the church were in constant conflict and felt under attack from all sides. They were at odds with Jews, who considered their views to be an aberrant and upstart perversion of the ancestral traditions of Israel. They were at odds with pagan

peoples and governments, who considered them a secretive and unauthorized religion that posed a danger to the state. And they were most vehemently and virulently at odds with each other, as different Christian teachers and groups argued that they and they alone had a corner on the truth and other Christian teachers and groups flat-out misunderstood the truths that Christ had proclaimed during his time on earth.

In all these battles, the "full armor of God" included weapons of deceit. Forgery was used by one Christian author or another in order to fend off the attacks of Jews and pagans and to assault the views of other Christians who had alternative, aberrant understandings of the faith. In this chapter I consider the conflicts with outsiders, the Jews and pagans opposed to the Christian faith. In the next chapter I take up the internal conflicts that plagued the Christian church from the beginning.

The Jewish Reaction to Christian Claims

MANY CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS today cannot understand why Jews do not accept the claim that Jesus is the messiah. For these Christians it all seems so obvious. The Old Testament predicted what the messiah would be like. Jesus did and experienced the things predicted. So of course he is the messiah. The Old Testament said he would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2); that he would have to flee as a child to Egypt and then come out from there (Hos. 11:1); and that he would be raised in Nazareth, so that he would be called a Nazarene (Isa. 11:1). It predicted that he would minister in Galilee (Isa. 9:1–2) and would be a great healer (53:4). It predicted his triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the acclamations of the crowd (Isa. 62:11; Zech. 9:9), his cleansing of the Temple (Jer. 7:11), and his rejection by the Jewish leaders (Ps. 118:22–23).

Most important, it predicted his crucifixion for the sins of others and his glorious resurrection from the dead (Pss. 22; 110; Isa. 53).

Jesus did everything that was predicted. Why don't the Jews see this? It is in their own Scriptures! Can't they read? Are they blind? Are they stupid?

The truth, of course, is that Jews throughout history have been no more illiterate, blind, or stupid than Christians. The typical response of Jews to the Christian claims that Jesus fulfilled prophecy is that the scriptural passages that Christians cite are either not speaking of a future messiah or are not making predictions at all. And one has to admit, just looking at this set of debates from the outside, the Jewish readers have a point. In the passages allegedly predicting the death and resurrection of Jesus, for example, the term "messiah" in fact never does occur. Many Christians are surprised by this claim, but just read Isaiah 53 for yourself and see.

Most ancient Jews rejected the messiahship of Jesus for the simple reason that Jesus was not at all like what most Jews expected a messiah to be. I should stress that a lot of Jews in the ancient world were not sitting on the edge of their seats waiting for a messiah, any more than most Jews today are. But there were groups of highly religious Jews around the time of Jesus who thought that God would send a messiah figure to deliver them from their very serious troubles. All these groups based their expectations on the Hebrew Bible, of course; but there were different expectations of what this messianic savior would be like.[1]

The term "messiah" comes from a Hebrew word that means "anointed one." It was originally, in the Hebrew Bible, used in reference to the king of Israel, a figure like King Saul, King David, or King Solomon. The king was literally "anointed" with oil on his head during his inauguration ceremony, in order to show that

God's special favor rested upon him in a unique way (see, e.g., Ps. 2). After a time, when there were no more kings over Israel, some Jews thought that God would send a future king, an anointed one like great King David of old, who, like David, would lead Israel's armies against its enemies and reestablish Israel once again as a sovereign state in the land. This future king, then, was to be the messiah, a completely human being who was a powerful warrior and great ruler of God's people.

Other, more cosmically minded Jews thought that this future savior would be a supernatural figure sent from heaven, a kind of cosmic judge of the earth who would engage the enemy with overpowering force before setting up a kingdom here on earth to be ruled by God's chosen one. Yet other Jews were principally focused on what we might call the "religion" of Israel, as opposed to its political situation. These Jews thought that the future ruler of the people would be a mighty priest who would empower the people of Israel by teaching them the correct interpretation of the Jewish law. He would rule God's people, then, by enforcing the observance of what God had demanded in Scripture.

In short, there were a variety of expectations of what a future "anointed" figure, a messiah, would be like. The one thing these conceptions of the future savior had in common was that they all expected him to be a figure of grandeur and might, empowered by God to overthrow the enemies and to rule the people of God with authority.

The followers of Jesus, on the other hand, claimed that he was the messiah. And who was Jesus? A little known preacher from backwoods Galilee who had offended the ruling authorities and was, as a result, subjected to public humiliation and torture and executed as a low-life criminal on a cross. For most Jews, it would have been hard to imagine anyone *less* like the expected messiah than Jesus of Nazareth.

But that is what Christians claimed, that Jesus was the messiah. The earliest Christians became convinced of this claim, because they believed that Jesus was actually, physically, raised by God from the dead. God had shown that Jesus was not just a lowly criminal or a powerless preacher. God had in fact empowered him to conquer the greatest enemy of all, death itself. Jesus had ascended to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God, and he is waiting to come back to establish his rule over the earth. According to this early Christian view, the Jewish expectations of the messiah were true. The messiah would overthrow the enemies of God in a show of strength. But before doing that he needed to conquer the bigger enemies, the evil powers of sin and death that were aligned against God and his people. Jesus conquered sin at the cross, and he conquered death at his resurrection. He, then, is the messiah. And he is coming back to finish the job.

For followers of Jesus, therefore, Scripture must have predicted not only the powerful aspects of the messiah's "second" coming, but also the significant events of his "first" coming. So Christians scoured the texts of Scripture to find passages that could feasibly refer to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Christians were certain that these passages (virgin birth in Bethlehem, triumphal entry, death for the sins of others, and so on) referred to Jesus, because Jesus was the messiah and the Scriptures predicted the messiah. Most Jews were not convinced, however, because none of these passages actually speaks about the messiah, the Hebrew Bible never states that the messiah would come twice, and Jesus's life was anything but the glorious life of God's anointed one.

And so there were deep and difficult conflicts from the beginning. In the early stages, Jews far outnumbered Christians and could easily overwhelm them. But Christians continually struck back and kept arguing. And arguing and arguing and arguing.

Among other things, many Christian Jews couldn't understand why non-Christian Jews didn't see their point and didn't accept the "fact" that Jesus was the messiah. The proofs were all there, right in the Scriptures themselves! As battle lines became more firmly drawn and both sides dug in and used harsher tactics, Christians began to argue that Jews who rejected Jesus were just as responsible for Jesus's death as the Jewish authorities who had originally called for it. Rejecting Jesus was tantamount to killing him.

And so non-Christian Jews came to be known as people who had killed their own messiah—Christ-killers. They obviously misunderstood their own Scriptures, and they had rejected their own God. As a result, God had rejected them.

It was in this context that a significant amount of literature was produced by both sides, especially by Christians. Some of this literature we still have today. A letter allegedly by Barnabas, companion of the apostle Paul, claims that Jews have always misunderstood their own religion by interpreting the law of Moses literally instead of figuratively, so that the Old Testament is not a Jewish, but a Christian book. There is a writing by the famous second-century Christian martyr Justin, in which he has a debate with a Jewish rabbi and shows him the errors of his interpretations of his own Scriptures. A sermon by Melito, a Christian bishop of the late second century, claims that Jews have not only rejected their messiah, but in killing him, the Son of God, they are guilty of deicide: they have killed God himself. And so it went.

Among the works produced by Christians in this back-and-forth were a number of forgeries, books written in the names of authoritative figures of the past intending to show the brilliant truth of Christianity and the horrendous errors of the Jews. In particular there were a number of forgeries that stressed the true character of Jesus: he was a divine being, not a mere mortal, as

acknowledged by the Roman authorities. In these writings it was not the Romans, but the Jewish leaders, or even the Jewish people themselves, who were responsible for Jesus's crucifixion.

Some Resultant Forgeries

THE GOSPEL OF PETER

We have already seen one forgery that was written, at least in part, to set forth this view. The *Gospel of Peter* (discussed in Chapter 2) emphasizes that "none of the Jews" was willing to wash his hands to show that he was innocent of Jesus's blood. In this Gospel it is the Jewish king Herod, not Pilate, who orders Jesus's death. And afterwards the Jewish people show their remorse for killing God's chosen one and acknowledge that now God will surely judge them and bring destruction to their holy city of Jerusalem, a reference to the Roman war that resulted in the burning of the Temple, the leveling of the walls, and the slaughter of the Jewish opposition in 70 CE.

The *Gospel of Peter* is one of the earliest Gospels from after the New Testament period, possibly written around 120 CE or so. Anti-Jewish Gospel forgeries became increasingly popular with time, especially as Christianity grew and was able to assert its power more convincingly.

THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS

One of the most intriguing Gospels comes near the end of the time period I am considering in this book, the first four Christian centuries. It is a lengthy account of Jesus's trial, death, and resurrection that falsely claims to be written by none other than

Nicodemus, the rabbi well known to Christian readers for his important role in the Gospel of John as a "secret" follower of Jesus (see 3:1–15).[2] The *Gospel of Nicodemus* became an extraordinarily popular and influential book throughout the Middle Ages, as it was widely circulated in the Latin West and was eventually translated and disseminated in nearly all of the languages of western Europe. It was, of course, believed to have been written by Nicodemus himself. But the account was probably composed sometime in the fourth century, three hundred years after Nicodemus's death (assuming he was a historical figure). It may well be based, however, on stories that had been passed down orally for two centuries before being written down.

The Gospel begins by indicating that Nicodemus had originally written the narrative in Hebrew. In fact, the account appears to be an original Greek composition. But by claiming that it appeared first in Hebrew the real author, whoever he was, provided it with an air of authenticity, showing both that the narrative was very old and that it was (supposedly) based on eyewitness testimony.

There is no question that the account is far from historical, as it is rooted in later legends about Jesus's final hours, his death, and his resurrection. The narrative is designed to show that Pilate was completely innocent of Jesus's execution, that the Jewish leaders and people were completely at fault, and that by rejecting Jesus the Jews have rejected God.

The divine character of Jesus is established at the outset of the narrative in one of its most interesting, and amusing, scenes. Before Jesus's trial, the Jewish authorities are speaking with Pilate, insisting that Jesus is guilty of crimes and needs to be condemned. Pilate has his courier bring Jesus into the courtroom. Inside the room are two slaves holding "standards" that have—as Roman standards did—an image of the "divine" Caesar on them. As Jesus enters the room, the standard bearers bow down before

him, so that the image of Caesar appears to be doing obeisance in his presence.

The Jewish authorities are incensed and malign the standard bearers, who reply that they had nothing to do with it. The images of Caesar bowed down of their own accord to worship Jesus. Pilate decides to try to get to the bottom of the matter and so tells the Jewish leaders to pick some of their own husky men to hold the standards and to have Jesus go out and enter a second time. The leaders choose twelve muscular Jews, six for each standard, who grasp them with all their might. Jesus reenters the room, and once again the standards bow down before him.

You might think that everyone would get the point, but that would ruin the story. Pilate becomes terrified and tries to get Jesus off the hook, but to no avail. The Jewish authorities declare that Jesus is an evildoer who deserves to die. Repeatedly throughout the course of the trial they accuse Jesus of wrongdoing and insist that he be judged. And just as repeatedly Pilate insists that he is innocent of all charges, expresses puzzlement about why the Jews are so intent on seeing him killed, and urges the Jewish leaders to allow him to release Jesus. But they refuse, wanting him dead. Three times they express their willingness to assume responsibility by speaking the words of Matthew 27:25, "His blood be upon us and our children."

When these words were first written centuries earlier, in Matthew's Gospel, they already expressed anti-Jewish sentiment. By speaking them, the Jewish crowds showed that they were willing not only to incur the guilt for Jesus's death, but also to pass along that guilt to future generations of Jews. Over the centuries the words were used by Christian opponents of Jews to blame the Jews for the death of Jesus and to inflict horrible acts of violence against them in retribution. That heightened form of anti-Judaism is already in evidence here, in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The Jewish authorities are shown to be willfully blind to Jesus's true

character. Even the emperor worships him (in the standards). And a number of witnesses are called who recount all the miracles he performed as the Son of God.

But to no avail. Jesus is crucified at the instigation of the Jews and their leaders. The rest of the account shows the truth of Jesus's divine character. He is raised from the dead, and the Jewish leaders themselves are given incontrovertible proof of the resurrection through the testimony of reliable witnesses.

Here, then, is a forged account, written some three hundred years after the events it narrates, to show that Jesus's death was undeserved, that the Romans (who were on the side of Christians by the mid-fourth century) had nothing to do with the crucifixion, that it was completely the Jews' fault, and that by rejecting Jesus the Jews have actually rejected their own God. No wonder an account such as this became so popular throughout western Europe in the Middle Ages, when hatred of the Jews was a constant and disturbing aspect of what it meant to be Christian.

The "Pilate Gospels"

A number of writings from about the time of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* are in one way or another connected with Pontius Pilate and his role in the death of Jesus. Most of these are designed to show that Pilate was not at fault for the death of Jesus and that he felt considerable remorse after the deed was done. In several of these writings we learn that Pilate not only repented of the evil deed, but actually became a believer in Christ. In later Christianity the conversion of Pilate became part of the accepted lore from the early church. In the Coptic church Pilate was eventually canonized as a Christian saint.

Historically, of course, nothing could be farther from the truth. Pilate continued on as a brutal governor of Judea after the death of Jesus. There is nothing in the historical record to

suggest that he even remembered having ordered Jesus's execution, let alone felt regret over it. Still, the reason for his later exoneration and even exaltation in parts of the Christian church is reasonably clear. If Pilate was not responsible for Jesus's death, then who was? The Jews. The legends of Pilate came to be written in a series of documents that may go back to the fourth Christian century or even earlier. A number of them are allegedly written by Pilate himself. All of them, however, are forged.

The Letter of Herod to Pilate

The first document we consider was not said to have been written by Pilate, but to him, by his colleague Herod Antipas, the *Letter of Herod to Pilate*. Historically Pilate is known to have been the Roman governor of Judea, in the southern part of Israel, when Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great (the ruler of the land when Jesus was born), was the Jewish ruler of Galilee, in the northern part of the land. Herod Antipas is best known from biblical tradition for having beheaded John the Baptist. In later legends he is said to have regretted what he did very much, as it came back to haunt him.

That is the case in this letter forged in his name, allegedly sent to Pilate.[3] Here Herod indicates that he is sorry to learn that Pilate had Jesus killed, because he, Herod, wanted to see him and to repent for the evil things he had done. God's judgment on sinners, he states, fits their crime. In a bizarre incident that he relates, his own daughter has literally lost her head in a flood that arose while she was playing on the banks of a river. The flood began to sweep her away, when her mother reached out to save her by grabbing her head. But her head was severed, so that the mother was left with just the child's head in her hands. This came, Herod states, as retribution for his having taken the head of John the Baptist.

He himself is suffering, rotting away even before he has died, so that he says, "Already worms are coming from my mouth." Here the pseudonymous author appears to confuse this Herod with the later Herod Agrippa, who according to the New Testament book of Acts was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12). So too the Roman soldier Longinus—the one who allegedly stuck a spear in Jesus's side when he was on the cross—has met a grisly fate. He is condemned to a cave where every night a lion comes and mauls his body until dawn. The next day his body grows back to normal, and the lion then comes again. This will go on until the end of time.

Pilate, however, the recipient of the letter, is portrayed in a positive light, as a representative of the Gentiles. Not they, but the Jews, will face judgment for what they did to Jesus: "Death will soon overtake the priests and the ruling council of the children of Israel, because they unjustly laid hands on the righteous Jesus." It is the Gentiles, then, who will inherit God's kingdom, whereas Herod and the other Jews "will be cast out," because they "did not keep the commandments of the Lord or those of his Son."

The Letter of Pilate to Herod

A second forged letter goes in the opposite direction, from Pilate to Herod.[4] One might expect this letter to be a response to the first, but despite its title, the *Letter of Pilate to Herod,* and the fact that it names some of the same characters (Herod, Pilate, and Longinus, the spear-wielding soldier), they have almost nothing else in common. In fact, this second letter does not refer to the first and stands at odds with it at a key point. Here Longinus, rather than being subject to never ending torment for what he did, is portrayed as a convert who came to believe in Jesus after the resurrection. That, in fact, is the point of this second

letter, that when Jesus was raised, not only Longinus, but also Pilate's wife, Procla, and then Pilate himself, all became believers.

According to the narrative of the letter, after Pilate did "a terrible thing" in having Jesus crucified, he hears that he was raised from the dead. Procla and Longinus go to find Jesus in Galilee. There he speaks with them, and they become convinced of his resurrection. When Pilate learns that Jesus has returned to life, he falls to the ground in deep grief. But then Jesus himself appears to him, raises him from the ground, and declares to him, "All generations and nations will bless you." Here Pilate is not only repentant; he is a Christian convert who will be considered fortunate by later adherents of the faith.

The Letter of Pilate to Claudius

We have another letter allegedly from Pilate to a Roman official, but this time it is supposedly directed to the Roman emperor Claudius, written to explain Pilate's role in the death of Jesus, the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius*.[5] It may seem strange for Pilate to be writing to Claudius, in particular, given the fact that it was Tiberius, not Claudius, who was emperor when Pilate condemned Jesus to death (Claudius became emperor a decade later). Possibly this letter was forged so long after the fact that the forger did not have the facts of imperial history from two hundred years earlier straight (do you know who was president of the United States in 1811?).

One of the places the letter is preserved for us is in a fabricated account of the missionary activities of the apostles called the *Acts of Peter and Paul*. In this account we are told that years after Jesus's death, the apostle Peter and the archheretic Simon the Magician, whom we met earlier, appear before the emperor Nero, evidently in the early 60s CE. When the emperor hears

about Christ, he asks Peter how he can learn more about him. Peter suggests that he retrieve the letter that Pilate had sent to his predecessor, the emperor Claudius, and to have it read aloud. He does so, and the letter then is quoted in full.

The idea that Pilate may have written a letter to the emperor to explain the death of Jesus was widespread in early Christianity. We have references to some such letter as early as the third century in the writings of the church father Tertullian and in the fourth century in the *Church History* of Eusebius.[6] The letter I am discussing here is probably not the one referred to by these two authors. Possibly this one was composed by a forger who thought that some such letter must once have existed. The themes of the short letter are very similar to ones we have already explored. It is the wicked Jews who are responsible for Jesus's death, and they will be punished by God for it. As "Pilate" states in the letter:

> The Jews, out of envy, have brought vengeance both on themselves and on those who come after them by their terrible acts of judgment. They have been oblivious to the promises given to their ancestors, that God would send them his holy one from heaven…through a virgin.

According to the letter Jesus proved that he was the son of God by his many miracles, but the Jewish leaders told lies in order to have him executed. Then they (not the Roman soldiers!) crucified him. When he arose from the dead "the wickedness of the Jews was set aflame," so that they bribed the soldiers to say that Jesus's disciples had stolen the body from the tomb. Pilate has written this letter so that the emperor will know the truth and not be "led to believe the false reports told by the Jews."

The Report of Pontius Pilate

A longer document called the *Report of Pontius Pilate* gives yet another letter of the Roman governor to the emperor, but this time to Tiberius, soon after the death of Jesus.[7] This letter appears to be much closer to what the early third-century Tertullian described when he claimed: "Pilate, who was himself already a Christian with respect to his most innermost conviction, made a report of everything that happened to Christ for Tiberius, the emperor at the time."[8] Again, it is doubtful if the surviving *Report* is the document Tertullian refers to. Scholars tend to date it to a later period, possibly the fourth century or so. Its chief claims, in any event, are similar to those of the other forgeries we have looked at in this chapter: Jesus was the miracle-working son of God who was wrongly condemned by the Jews to death. Pilate was innocent of the entire proceeding.

The *Report* starts by stressing that Pilate was administering the province of Judea according to "the most gentle directives" of the emperor. Nothing hard-hearted or malicious about this Pilate! But the "entire multitude of the Jews" (not just the Jewish leaders) handed Jesus over to him, "bringing endless charges against him" even though they "were not able to convict him of a single crime."

Pilate goes on to indicate, however, that Jesus had done many miracles, making the blind see, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, healing paralytics, and so on. These were amazing deeds, as Pilate himself confesses: "For my part, I know that the gods we worship have never performed such astounding feats as his." But the Jews are unmoved and threaten a riot, and so Pilate orders him crucified.

At Jesus's death a miraculous darkness covers the earth, and at his resurrection a miraculous brightness appears. At three in the morning the sun begins to shine in full strength, angels are seen in the heavens, there are earthquakes and the splitting of

rocks, and great chasms form in the earth. All this spells disaster for the recalcitrant Jews:

> The light did not cease that entire night, O King, my master. And many of the Jews died, being engulfed and swallowed up in the chasms in that night, so that their bodies could no longer be found. I mean to say that those Jews who spoke against Jesus suffered. But one synagogue was left in Jerusalem, since all the synagogues that opposed Jesus were engulfed.

The Handing Over of Pilate

A final example of a "Pilate Gospel" is called the *Handing Over of Pilate*.[9] This is not a letter, but a narrative that reports what happened to Pilate once the emperor Tiberius received his report of what had occurred at Jesus's death and resurrection. The *Handing Over* seems to presuppose the existence of the *Report of Pilate,* but it is stylistically different and has points of disagreement with the earlier text. Scholars tend to think, then, that they were written by different authors.

The *Handing Over* begins by stating that Pilate's letter arrived in Rome and was read to Tiberius Caesar in front of a large crowd, who marveled to learn that the daytime darkness and worldwide earthquake they had experienced came as a result of the crucifixion of the Son of God. Caesar is "filled with anger," and he sends soldiers to arrest Pilate to bring him to Rome. When Pilate arrives, Caesar puts him on trial and upbraids him for executing Jesus: "By daring to do this wicked deed you have destroyed the entire world."

Pilate protests his innocence, however, and insists that "it is the multitude of the Jews who are reckless and guilty." Caesar replies that, even so, Pilate should have known better, since it

was obvious from Jesus's miracles that "he was the Christ." As soon as Caesar mentions the name Christ, all of the pagan idols in the senate house, where the trial is being held, fall to the ground and turn to dust. Here, as in the *Gospel of Nicodemus,* the gods of the pagans do humble obeisance before the divinity of Christ and come to naught. In this episode it happens just at the mention of Christ's divine name.

Pilate repeats that Jesus's works showed that he was "greater than all the gods" that they worshiped. But he executed him "because of the anarchy and rebelliousness of the lawless and godless Jews." Caesar and the senate take a vote and decide to destroy the nation of the Jews. They then send in the armies, who destroy the nation and take all the Jewish survivors to sell off as slaves. Pilate himself is condemned to death for his part in the affair.

Before he dies, however, Pilate prays to God and pleads his innocence, once again saying that Jesus's death was because of the "nation of godless Jews." When he finishes his prayer, a voice comes from heaven—the voice of Christ himself—assuring Pilate of his salvation: "All the races and families of the Gentiles will bless you, because under your rule everything spoken about me by the prophets was fulfilled. You yourself will appear as my witness at my second coming." When the executioner chops off Pilate's head, an angel swoops down and takes it, presumably to carry it up to heaven.

The Purpose of the "Pilate Gospels"

The overarching points of these later Pilate Gospels should by now be clear. By exonerating Pilate in the death of Jesus, the accounts make the Jews, not just their leaders, bear all the guilt. The more innocent Pilate is, the more culpable are the Jews. According to some of the legends, Pilate is so innocent that he

becomes a devoted believer and follower of Christ. God is therefore angry with the Jews and punishes them for their crime against the Son of God.

These writings were forged in a period that saw heightened animosities between Christians and Jews. Christians realized there would be no rapprochement with the Jews and there was little chance that most Jews would ever come to see the "truth" about Jesus, that he was the messiah of God, not just a lowly crucified criminal. This "truth," then, is what prompted these Christian "false writings." That is to say, a number of Christian authors chose to tell the truth about the divine Christ and about his wicked enemies, the Jews, by forging documents, claiming to be people they weren't. Christian readers of these documents accepted them at face value as real reports from the time, instead of what they were, forgeries from later periods. The authors intended to deceive their readers, and their readers were all too easily deceived.

WRITINGS OF JESUS

We have very few writings from early Christianity that claim to be by Jesus himself, and very few indications that Jesus could in fact write. But there are a few reports of his writing—even though this is not widely known, even among scholars—and a couple of surviving writings that he is (falsely) said to have produced.

Even within the pages of the New Testament there is a record of Jesus writing. This is not a story originally found in the New Testament, however, but a later account that scribes added to the Gospel of John. In fact, it is in one of the best-known stories about Jesus, Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (8:1–11).

In the story the Jewish authorities drag a woman before Jesus and indicate that she has been caught in the act of adultery.

According to the law of Moses, they say, she is to be stoned to death. But what does Jesus say? This is an obvious trap. If Jesus says, "Yes, by all means, stone her," he is violating his own teachings on forgiveness and mercy. But if he says, "No, let her go," he is violating the law of Moses. So what is he to do? Jesus, of course, always finds a way out of these traps, and he does so in this case by stooping down and writing on the ground. He then looks up and says, "Let the one without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." He then stoops back down and resumes writing. Gradually, ashamed of their own sins, all the Jewish authorities leave, one by one, until there is no one left to condemn the woman.

It is a fascinating account, even if it was not originally part of the New Testament.[10] But what is especially interesting for our discussion here is what Jesus does when he stoops down. He is not said to be drawing or doodling on the ground. He is literally said to be "writing." The Greek term clearly indicates that he is writing words. This is the earliest indication that we have that Jesus was even able to write.[11] One recent study of this passage in fact argues that it was composed years after Jesus's death precisely in order to show that he *could* write.[12]

Several alleged writings of Jesus are mentioned by church fathers. Unfortunately, none of these forgeries survive. The fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions,* for example, mentions books forged in Jesus's name by the heretics Simon and Cleobius. It is hard to know if such books actually existed or if they were simply said to have existed in order to attack these false teachers for forging them.

The fifth-century theologian Augustine, on the other hand, mentions a letter allegedly written by Jesus that probably did exist.[13] The letter was addressed to the apostles Peter and Paul and endorsed magical practices. Augustine had no difficulty showing that the letter was forged, since Paul was not actually a disciple

during Jesus's lifetime, but only after his death. Augustine plausibly argues that the forger had seen paintings of Jesus with Peter and Paul (such as one can still see, for example, in the catacombs of Rome) and made the false inference that Paul was one of Jesus's earthly disciples. On that errant basis the forger made up a letter that Jesus allegedly sent to Paul along with Peter. Regrettably, we no longer have the letter.[14]

A couple of other writings, however, do survive in Jesus's name from the first four centuries. Neither is probably best seen as a forgery, however, since neither seems to be making a serious claim to have been written by the historical Jesus himself. One is found in an account of Jesus's death and resurrection called the *Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea*. According to this highly fictionalized narrative, one of the robbers crucified along with Jesus is pardoned for his sins and promised a place in heaven. From the cross, Jesus writes a letter to the angelic cherubim who are in charge of heaven, instructing them to let this fellow in when he arrives at the gates. This is a terrifically intriguing letter, but it really doesn't seem as though the author intends for his readers to take it seriously as something written by Jesus.[15] But I may be wrong.

Another writing by Jesus is a document discovered in 1945 with a collection of Gnostic texts called the Nag Hammadi library, about which I say more in the next chapter. This document is written in the first person, in the name of Jesus, describing the true nature of his crucifixion and the true way of having salvation through him. It is called the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (the first treatise, if it ever existed, no longer survives). Even though Jesus claims to be writing this book, it is the resurrected Jesus writing from heaven. For that reason it is not exactly the same thing as a forgery in the name of the earthly Jesus.

One brief letter that claims to have been written by the earthly Jesus, however, does survive. The letter was produced by

someone who probably wanted to deceive his readers into thinking that it really was by Jesus. If so, it is appropriately called a forgery. This letter is part of a correspondence between Jesus and a certain King Abgar, of the city of Edessa, in Syria. Our first record of this correspondence is in the *Church History* of Eusebius, who claims actually to have uncovered both letters in the Edessan city archives. Eusebius indicates that the letters were written in Syriac, but that he translated them into Greek. He then cites them in full.[16]

The first letter is from the "Ruler Abgar" addressed to "Jesus the Good Savior." Abgar indicates that he has heard all about Jesus's miraculous healings and has concluded that Jesus must either be "God…having descended from heaven" or the "Son of God." In either event, Abgar asks that Jesus come to him and heal him of his illness (without stating what it is). He adds that this would be of benefit to Jesus as well, as he has "heard that the Jews are murmuring against and wish to harm" Jesus.

Jesus writes a reply in which he indicates that Abgar is blessed for believing in him sight unseen and comments, "It is written about me that those who see me will not believe me, and that those who do not see me will believe and live" (see Isa. 6:9; Matt. 13:14–17; John 9:39; 12:39–40). In other words, the people among whom Jesus lived and worked ("the Jews" mentioned by Abgar) would not believe and would, therefore, not have life, but death. Jesus goes on to refuse politely Abgar's request to join him in Edessa, as he has to "accomplish everything I was sent here to do" and then "ascend to the One who sent me." Jesus does promise, however, that after his ascension he will send one of his disciples who will heal Abgar and "provide life both to you and to those who are with you."

I assume this final sentence means that the disciple will teach them the gospel, which they will then believe for eternal life. According to later legends Jesus fulfilled his promise to King Abgar.

An apostle was dispatched to Edessa, healed the king of his illness, and converted him and the entire city to faith in Christ.

The Abgar correspondence accomplishes an end similar to that of the Pilate Gospels, but in a far more subtle way. Here too Jews are attacked for their opposition to Jesus and are said not be heirs of eternal life because they reject him. This letter too, then, represents antagonism against the Jewish people for their role in the death of Jesus.

As a side note, the correspondence with Abgar appears to have had an interesting afterlife. As it was circulated throughout the early church, scribes changed it in places. Some of our surviving manuscripts of Jesus's letter add a final line that informs King Abgar: "Your city will be blessed, and the enemy will no longer prevail over it." This proved to be a very helpful promise to the citizens of Edessa. In the later fourth century a wealthy Christian woman named Egeria from the western part of the empire (either Spain or France) decided to go on a pilgrimage to visit all the sacred places of the Holy Land. During her journeys she kept a journal in Latin, which we still have today.[17] On her travels, Egeria went to Edessa and saw the letters between Jesus and Abgar, as shown to her by the Christian bishop of the place.

According to the bishop, when the city of Edessa had come under attack by the armies of Persia, the then ruler of the city had taken the letter of Jesus, which promised that the city would not be conquered, and held it up at the city gate. The attacking army was thwarted by the magical power of the letter and retreated, eventually returning home to Persia without harming a soul. Later a copy of the letter was attached to the city gate, and no enemy had tried to attack it since. This, then, was a very useful letter to have on hand, even if it was forged.

Pagan Opposition to Christianity

AS WE TURN FROM considering antagonism toward the Jews by early Christians to opposition occasionally found among pagans, it is important to clear up a few common misconceptions about early Christianity in the Roman Empire. It is widely thought that from its early days Christianity was an illegal religion, that Christians could not confess their faith openly for fear of governmental persecution, and that as a result they had to go into hiding, for example, in the Roman catacombs. As it turns out, none of that is true. Strictly speaking, Christianity was no more illegal than any other religion. In most times and places, Christians could be quite open about their faith. There was rarely any need to "lie low."

It is true that Christians were sometimes opposed by pagans for being suspicious and possibly scurrilous, just as most "new" religions found opponents in the empire. But there were no imperial decrees leveled against Christianity in its first two hundred years, no declarations that it was illegal, no attempt throughout the empire to stamp it out. It was not until the year 249 CE that any Roman emperor—in this case it was the emperor Decius—instituted an empire-wide persecution of Christians.

Before Decius, persecutions were almost entirely local affairs. More often than not they were the result of mob violence rather than "official" opposition initiated by local authorities. When there was official opposition, it was usually in order to placate the crowds, who did not approve of the Christians in their midst. But what was there not to approve?

For pagans, lots of things. Probably most important, as we have seen, pagans typically worshiped their gods because it was believed that the gods provided people with what they needed and wanted in life: peace, security, prosperity, health, food, drink, rain, crops, children, and everything else that made life both possible and meaningful. The pagan gods were not thought to require much in return. They did not insist that anyone

actually “believe” in them, for example; and they did not have complicated “laws” that had to be followed. The gods more or less demanded that they be worshiped in appropriate ways; people were to perform the acceptable and traditional sacrifices that had long been part of their worship and say the prayers that were appropriate to them.

If people worshiped the gods, the gods took care of the people. It was an easy and helpful arrangement. But what happened when the gods were not worshiped, when they were ignored or flouted? Well, then things were not good. The gods could make life very miserable indeed if angered; they could bring war, drought, natural disaster, destruction, death. How, then, would people react if some kind of disaster struck a community? Their natural assumption was to think that one or more of the gods was angry and needed to be placated.

If a group of people in a community rejected the proper worship of the gods, insisted the gods didn’t exist, declared that they were evil demons, or simply refused to do the very minimal requirements of public worship, this group would be the most susceptible to blame if disaster hit the community. The Christian church was just such a group. Other religions followed the ancient traditions that had been handed down in worshiping the gods. Even the Jews were widely seen as acceptable, even though they worshiped just their one God. They were known to perform sacrifices on behalf of the emperor’s well-being (rather than to him), and this was deemed appropriate. Moreover, their traditions were known to be ancient and venerable, and they did no one any harm, did not behave in socially inappropriate ways, and more or less kept to themselves. The Jews, then, were seen as an exception to the rule that the local and imperial divinities needed to be worshiped.

Christians, on the other hand, were not treated as an exception. Christians for the most part were either Jews who no longer

seemed to keep the ancestral Jewish customs (so in what sense were they Jews?) or Gentiles who had abandoned the worship of the gods for the worship of the God of Jesus. Christians flat-out refused to worship the gods that had made the state great and that provided all the necessary and good things of life. If disaster struck a community that housed such Christians, they were the natural scapegoat for retribution. Punish the Christians and return to the gods' good favor. Thus Tertullian's famous lines about Christians being subject to persecution whenever disaster struck a community:

> They think the Christians the cause of every public disaster, of every affliction with which the people are visited. If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters up over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is a famine or pestilence, straightway the cry is: Away with the Christians to the lion![18]

Moreover, the Christian refusal to participate in state-sponsored worship was often seen as a kind of political statement that Christians were not concerned for the welfare of the state. This was considered antisocial and dangerous. Other aspects of the Christian religion contributed to this perception. For one thing, Christians worshiped a crucified man, that is, someone who had been condemned by the state. Wasn't that a kind of political statement, that Christians were more or less thumbing their noses at the judgment of the state? And even apart from that, wasn't it a matter of sheer lunacy to abandon the tried and true religion of the state in order to worship a crucified criminal?

Another problem was that, unlike Judaism, Christianity was such a new phenomenon. People in the ancient world loved nothing more than antiquity, and there was nothing that could authenticate a religion or a philosophy more than a claim to having

ancient roots. The old was venerable; the new was suspect. And what was Christianity? It was the worship of a man who lived quite recently, in "modern" times. How could it possibly be true?

Not only was this new religion seen as dangerous and false; it was also seen as corrupt and perverted. Christians did not hold open meetings that everyone could attend. There were no church buildings that opened up on Sunday morning for anyone interested in learning about the new faith. Churches for the first two hundred years almost always met in private homes, and the meetings themselves were private. Only Christians attended. The religion was thought by others, therefore, to be secretive. And not only that, there were also rumors about what happened at these meetings.

For one thing, since the majority of Christians were from the lower, working classes, the weekly meetings as a rule took place either before the work day began, before dawn, or after it was over, after sundown, that is, when it was dark. These nocturnal meetings were rumored to be held among people who were "brothers" and "sisters" and who were known to "love one another" and to "greet one another with a kiss." And they held periodic "love feasts" in which they celebrated the love of their god for them and their love for each other. If you wanted to start a rumor mill going about the early Christians, how much better could it get? Christians, whose meetings were not public, were thought to be engaged in licentious and incestuous activities, brothers and sisters gorging themselves, probably getting drunk, and holding love feasts in the dark.

Worse than that, it was reported that at these love feasts Christians ate the flesh of the Son of God and drank his blood. Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a child? In addition to incest, Christians were thought to be committing infanticide and cannibalism, killing babies and then eating them.

These charges may all sound extremely far-fetched, but they were commonly leveled against Christians by their pagan enemies. In one early Christian source called the *Octavius,* written by the third-century author Minucius Felix, we read of a pagan who expresses his disgust at what happens at the Christian nighttime services. This view, according to Minucius Felix, derives from the famous pagan scholar Fronto, the tutor of the emperor Marcus Aurelius:

> On a special day they [i.e., the Christians] gather for a feast with all their children, sisters, mothers—all sexes and all ages. There, flushed with the banquet after such feasting and drinking, they begin to burn with incestuous passions. They provoke a dog tied to the lampstand to leap and bound towards a scrap of food which they have tossed outside the reach of his chain. By this means the light is overturned and extinguished, and with it common knowledge of their actions; in the shameless dark with unspeakable lust they copulate in random unions, all equally being guilty of incest, some by deed, but everyone by complicity.[19]

But these weekly activities pale in comparison with their periodic sacred meals, celebrated with the new converts to the faith:

> The notoriety of the stories told of the initiation of new recruits is matched by their ghastly horror. A young baby is covered over with flour, the object being to deceive the unwary. It is then served before the person to be admitted into their rites. The recruit is urged to inflict blows onto it—they appear to be harmless because of the covering of flour. Thus the baby is killed with sounds that remain unseen and concealed. It is the blood of this infant—I shudder to mention it—it is this blood that they lick with thirsty

> lips; these are the limbs they distribute eagerly; this is the victim by which they seal their covenant; it is by complicity in this crime that they are pledged to mutual silence; these are their rites, more foul than all sacrileges combined.[20]

These were the kinds of charges that Christians had to defend themselves against. If local mobs believed such things, it is no wonder that they opposed Christians, sometimes with violence.

And if the masses were against the people who participated in the new religion, what choice did local officials have but to oppose them as well? Local persecutions of Christians were designed less to punish them for their crimes than to get them to renounce their religion and return to the true fold. That is why, in virtually all the early accounts of the Christian martyrs, the judges ruling in the cases brought against Christians plead with them to recant their faith.[21] These authorities' goal was not to hurt the Christians, but to convince them to stop being Christian. Christians were seen as a threat to both the political health of the empire, to the extent that the gods could become upset and exact vengeance, and the fabric of society, through their grossly immoral behavior.

Christians of course defended themselves against all such charges, and did so in a number of ways. Starting in the second half of the second century, intellectual pagans started occasionally converting to this new faith. These were a new breed of Christian: literate, highly educated, trained in rhetorical skills, able to make sustained philosophical arguments and to write them down, and willing to take a public stand defending the faith. These intellectual defenders of the faith are normally called "apologists." As we have seen, "apology" in this context is not an attempt to say you're sorry; it comes from the Greek work *apologia,* which means "a reasoned defense." Among the more famous Christian apologists of the second and third centuries were

Justin Martyr of Rome, Athenagoras of Athens, Tertullian of Carthage, and Origen of Alexandria.

These authors insisted to anyone who would listen that Christians were not opposed to the state, but were in fact fully supportive of the state. The state survived and thrived not because of offerings made to dead idols, but because of prayers made to the living God, who had power and sovereignty over all. The worship of a crucified man was not a statement of opposition to the state; quite the contrary, the state representatives—Pontius Pilate, for example—had emphatically declared Jesus not guilty. Jesus's death was a miscarriage of justice perpetrated by the recalcitrant Jews, who had rejected their own messiah and therefore their own God. God had, as a result, rejected them in favor of his faithful people, the Christians. Rather than being a "new" religion, therefore, Christianity was quite ancient. It was in fact the true expression of ancient Judaism, a religion older than anything in either pagan philosophy or myth.

The best of the pagan philosophers, according to some of the apologists, shared views made sharper by the Christian message of the one true God, who had become manifest in his son Jesus. Jesus himself had taught an exceedingly high set of morals, and his followers were far more ethical than anyone else. Of course they did not murder infants; they did not even allow abortion. Of course they did not commit cannibalism; they were completely circumspect in what they ate and did not indulge in gluttony or drunkenness. Of course they did not commit incest; their love for one another was chaste. In fact, many of them practiced lifelong chastity, even if married. Of course they did not support fornication or adultery; for them, not only was it wrong to have sex with someone other than your spouse; it was a sin even to want to do so.

For the apologists, in short, Christianity was an ancient, philosophically respectable, and highly moral religion that stood

over against the false religions of both pagans and Jews. Eventually this message caught on, as more and more pagans converted to the faith. Ultimately, once Christianity became the religion of the empire, the apologists' view would be accepted as obvious and commonsensical. Before that, though, Christians had to fight for their religious beliefs and practices. And one of the ways they fought was through their literary endeavors, which included the production of forgeries.

Some Resultant Forgeries

Several Forgeries Already Seen

A number of the forgeries we have already considered functioned as well in the apologetic defense of the faith against pagan assaults. Here I need to stress a point I have not yet made. It would be a mistake to think that an author must have produced a forgery for one and only one purpose. This isn't the case for other books, and it is certainly not the case for forgeries either.

This book that I'm writing now—what is its purpose? In fact, there are multiple purposes. I want to inform my readers about an important ancient literary phenomenon. I want to correct mistakes that other scholars have made in discussing that phenomenon. I want readers to think more deeply about the role of lies and deception in the history of the Christian religion. I want to show the irony in the fact that lies and deception have historically been used to establish the "truth." I want my readers to see that there may be forgeries in the New Testament. I want to tell interesting stories about intriguing and relatively unknown writings from antiquity. I want to entertain my readers. In fact, I want to accomplish lots of things. Hardly any writing has just one purpose. So too forgeries. As a rule they were multifunctional.

Take, for example, the group of writings that I have called the "Pilate Gospels." These serve to show that the Jews were the ones responsible for the death of Jesus. They do so by emphasizing, quite strenuously, that the Roman governor Pontius Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent of all charges. That emphasis functions as a kind of Christian anti-Judaism, allowing Christian readers to conclude that Jews were wicked Christ-killers. But it also functions to help Christians defend themselves against attacks leveled at them by pagans. In response to pagans who insisted that Jesus was a convicted criminal opposed by the Roman state, Christians could argue that it wasn't true, that the appointed governor of Judea found Jesus innocent and crucified him only because the maleficent Jews forced him to do so. Jesus was no criminal, and neither are his followers.

Or consider the letters between the apostle Paul and the Roman philosopher Seneca. On one level these letters satisfied Christian curiosity. How could the most significant theologian of the young faith not have been known to the other great minds of his day? These letters showed that in fact Paul was known and respected by the greatest thinker of them all, the incomparable Seneca. But more than satisfying curiosity, these letters fulfilled an apologetic role in showing that, far from being a backwater religion of lower-class peasants, Christianity from the outset was a highly respectable philosophical tradition. How highly respected was it? The greatest Roman philosopher of the first century revered the apostle Paul and praised his uncanny insights.

In a different way some of the earliest Christian letters—the New Testament ones allegedly by Peter and Paul—may well have served to try to ward off attacks from pagan antagonists. Take 1 Peter as an example. Here is a letter in which a pseudonymous author, claiming to be Simon Peter, comforts Christians of Asia Minor who are undergoing suffering. But the letter is not only meant to provide comfort; it is also meant to provide a defense

against precisely the accusations leveled against the Christians that created the conditions for suffering.

For example, Christians are thought to be opposed to the government, and so the author urges his readers: "Be submissive to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to the emperor as the one who is supreme or to overseers who have been sent by him for the punishment of those who do wrong and praise of those who do right. For this is the will of God: that by doing good you silence the ignorance of foolish people" (2:13–15). Pagans also charge Christians with living flagrantly immoral lives, and so the author urges: "Abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul; maintain good behavior in front of the Gentiles, so that if they slander you as evildoers they may observe your good works and glorify God" (4:11–12). Pagans claim that Christians are socially disruptive, and so the author tells slaves to be submissive to their masters, wives to be submissive to their husbands, husbands to treat their wives considerately, and all to behave well: "Do not return evil for evil or verbal abuse for verbal abuse, but give a blessing instead" (3:8). Since these admonitions allegedly come from Peter himself—the most important leader of the early church—they take on special importance as representing the very core of the Christian message, from the very beginning.

There was a very different function for one other forgery we have already looked at, the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. In antiquity this book was sometimes called the *Acts of Pilate,* since its first half records an account of Jesus's death from the perspective of the Roman governor himself, Pontius Pilate. This account is, of course, very sympathetic toward both Pilate and Jesus. Jesus is innocent of the charges brought against him, and Pilate proclaims his innocence repeatedly, acknowledging the divine character of Jesus's miracles and life and finally ordering his execution only after being forced to by Jesus's Jewish opponents.

We may be able to isolate a more precise reason for the writing of this book. According to Eusebius, in the year 311, an anti-Christian pagan book was forged called the *Acts of Pilate*. This writing portrayed Jesus in an extremely negative way, indicating that he fully deserved everything he got, as seen through the eyes of Pontius Pilate. So impressed with this book was the Roman emperor Maximin Daia that he had it posted in public places throughout the empire and decreed that it should be used in schools for training children to read.[22]

This pagan *Acts of Pilate,* then, was an enormously popular and widespread book; unfortunately it no longer survives. Is it an accident that some years later an *alternative* version of the *Acts of Pilate* appeared, one in which Jesus is portrayed as innocent, not guilty, and in which Pilate is shown to support Jesus and declare him divine, rather than oppose him and declare him worthy of death? In the opinion of a number of scholars, the *Acts of Pilate* that we now have (also known as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*) was produced precisely in order to counter the pagan *Acts of Pilate,* as a way of setting the record straight.

The Sibylline Oracles

In ancient Rome it was believed that there had been, in remote antiquity, a prophetess who was known as the Sibyl. She was extraordinarily long-lived; according to the poet Ovid she lived a thousand years.[23] According to venerable tradition, the Sibyl had written extensive poems that were prophetic in nature, designed not only to tell the future, but also to tell rulers of Rome what to do in times of crisis. The various writings attributed to the Sibyl were collected over the years and stored in one of the great sacred spaces in Rome, the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. A group of priests, eventually named "The Fifteen," were appointed to preserve and interpret these writings as the need arose and

as they were directed by the Roman senate. Some records indicate that the Sibylline oracles, as they were called, were consulted some fifty times between 500 and 100 BCE, in times of plague, famine, or prodigy (i.e., when some highly unusual supernatural event seemed to occur), in order to learn what the prophetess had said concerning what should be done about it.[24]

A great tragedy occurred in 83 BCE when the Temple of Jupiter was burned, and the books of the oracles with it. The senate directed that other copies of the oracles should be collected from various places, especially the city of Erythrea, and an attempt was made to reconstitute the original writings. Eventually these too came to be destroyed. Today we know of only two brief sayings that probably belonged to this second group of Sibylline oracles, and none from the first.

The tradition that there had once lived a pagan prophetess who could reliably foretell the future was so strong that the temptation to create oracles, or prophecies, in her name proved irresistible to later peoples, especially to Jews, and after them Christians. As I have already pointed out, Jews were widely accepted throughout the empire. Even so, they occasionally had to fight for their right to coexist with pagans and to defend their religion against pagan attacks. By forging oracles in the name of the Sibyl, Jews were able to claim that their religion was very ancient, as attested by this most ancient of prophetesses, and compatible with the best of the pagan religions.

A number of forged Jewish Sibylline oracles were brought together into a collection, which was later taken over by unknown Christian authors.[25] These writers modified a number of the oracles by inserting their own Christian "prophecies" into them; they also added some entirely new oracles to the collection. This Christianized version of the *Sibylline Oracles* was handed down through the centuries, and we still have twelve books of them today.

The Jewish and Christian writings forged in the name of the Sibyl were written over a span of some seven hundred years and were finally assembled by a Byzantine Christian scholar sometime in the sixth century CE. Because of problems in how the books were copied over the centuries, the twelve books are numbered somewhat out of sequence, as books 1–8 and 11–14. Some of these are Jewish; some of them are Jewish books that have had extensive Christian insertions made into them (e.g., books 1–2 and 8); and others are exclusively Christian (book 6 and probably 7). The Christian portions of the oracles forged in the name of the Sibyl predict the coming of Christ and attack Jews for failing to believe in this one who was to come.

Just to give an example of how these apologetic forgeries work, consider the first book, which is largely Jewish until the final section, which contains a Christian insertion. The book begins with the Sibyl's statement: "Beginning from the first generation of articular men down to the last, I will prophesy all in turn, such things as were before, as are, and as will come upon the world."[26] Here, then, is a reliable ancient pagan prophetess who will tell the future. After narrating the creation of the world and then all the generations of the human race, the Sibyl continues, in the Christian insertion, to indicate the following:

> Then indeed the son of the great God will come, incarnate, likened to mortal men on earth.... He will show eternal life to chosen men. He will cure the sick and all who are blemished, as many as put faith in him. The blind will see, and the lame will walk. The deaf will hear; those who cannot speak will speak.

But, she says, "Israel, with abominable lips and poisonous spittings will give this man blows." She goes on to describe Christ's death and resurrection, and the eventual destruction of "the Hebrews" for the evil deed they performed against Christ.

One of the more powerful passages in the surviving Sibylline oracles is the very short book 6, which represents a hymn to Christ: "I speak from my heart of the great famous son of the Immortal, to whom the most High, his begetter, gave a throne to possess before he was born." It goes on to talk about his glorious coming into the world, his rejection, and the consequences for Israel, for whom evil afflictions are in store:

> For with your hostile mind you did not perceive your god when he came before mortal eyes. But you crowned him with a crown from the thornbush and you mixed terrible gall for insult and drink. That will cause great afflictions for you.

Possibly the most intriguing passage in the *Sibylline Oracles* comes in the Christian insertion in book 8, where a long section of prophecies forms an acrostic. If you take the first letter of each of these lines and put them together in sequence, they spell out the Greek words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, Cross." This kind of acrostic is meant to have symbolic, hidden meaning. Among other things it shows that there was considerable forethought that went into the composition of the poem, made all the remarkable by the fact that it was allegedly constructed by a pagan prophetess living centuries before the birth of Jesus.

The Christian Sibylline oracles were well known in antiquity. As early as Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century they are referred to as predicting the truths of Christianity.[27] As you might imagine, pagans intent on attacking Christians knew full well that these oracular "predictions" of the coming of Christ, his activities on earth, his rejection by the Jews, and his vindication were not original to an ancient Sibyl, but had been inserted into these writings or created whole cloth by Christian authors.[28] This is one instance in which unknown forgers among the

Christians were rightly suspected. They were also, of course, roundly condemned, as almost always happened with forgers in antiquity.

Conclusion

CHRISTIANS OF THE FIRST three centuries often felt themselves under attack for their faith, and for good reason. They *were* under attack. From the early years of the church, non-Christian Jews rejected the Christian message that Jesus was the Jewish messiah sent in fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures, and this led not only to serious debate over the proper interpretation of Scripture but also to serious animosity. The animosity heightened as Christian Jews felt that their non-Christian Jewish opponents refused to listen to reason and were obviously being either willful or blind. As Christianity grew in numbers and power, the tensions increased. Eventually, of course, Christianity would get the upper hand, and once that happened, it became an unfair fight. The entire ugly history of Christian anti-Judaism was the result.

While Christians were fighting their Jewish neighbors on the one hand, they were having to ward off the attacks of pagans on the other. Far more than official persecution, it was local opposition to Christians among their former families, friends, and neighbors—and eventually mobs—that caused Christians the most problems in the early centuries before the Roman emperors came to be active sponsors of empire-wide persecutions in the mid-third century. Many pagans viewed Christians as politically dangerous, socially disruptive, and flagrantly immoral. Christians had to defend themselves against these charges by showing they were obedient members of the state, socially coherent and conservative, and the most moral beings on the planet.

The two prongs of the Christian counterattack were, as we have seen, closely related. By attacking Jews for rejecting their own messiah, Christians were able simultaneously to declare the innocence of Jesus and his followers to governmental officials and other interested pagan observers. By claiming to be the true representatives of the ancient Jewish religion, Christians not only attempted to displace the Jews, but also to provide a sense of antiquity for their own religious claims; they were as old as Moses, who was older by far than any pagan lawgivers or philosophers. By painting the Jews as immoral haters of God, Christians were able to pass themselves off as superior moral beings of no threat to the social order.

Into this maelstrom of attack and counterattack, some Christian authors introduced the weapons of literary forgery. The ultimate goal of the church was to establish itself as true and, of course, to show that all other religions were, as a consequence, false. So once more we have one of the great ironies of the early Christian religion: some of its leading spokespersons appear to have had no qualms about lying in order to promote the faith, to practice deception in order to establish the truth.

CHAPTER SIX

Forgeries in Conflicts with False Teachers

I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED A GOOD, reasoned debate on a controversial issue. In high school I was on the debate team and loved it. My debate colleagues and I were good at it already as sixteen-year-olds, able to take either side of a hot topic and argue for it, then turn around and argue the opposing side in the next debate. I still do public debates around the country today, almost always with evangelical Christian scholars, on topics of importance, especially to evangelical Christians. "Can Historians Prove That Jesus Was Raised from the Dead?" (I always argue that, no, no one can *prove* it.) "Are the Gospel Accounts of Jesus Reliable?" (No, not completely.) "Does the Bible Provide an Adequate Answer to Why There Is Suffering?" (No, not really.) And so on.

I also think debates can be useful pedagogically in the classroom; they help undergraduate students learn how to mount arguments, assess evidence, and see the strengths of a position they personally reject. So I have my students debate controversial topics in my course on the New Testament. "Did Paul and Jesus Represent Fundamentally Different Religions?" "Were the Apostle Paul's Views of Women Oppressive?" "Does the New Testament Condemn Modern Practices of Homosexuality?"

Sometimes in setting up these debates I find out in advance which side students want to take (affirmative or negative) and then assign them to the *opposite* side, forcing them to argue for a position they personally reject. It's a great exercise. Politicians

should try it sometime, to see that their opponents may actually have something important and persuasive to say.

In my many years of formal debate and in my many more years of informal discussion, I've come to realize something very significant. We tend to get in the hottest arguments about topics that we really care about and with people we are closest to. Only rarely do we get intense and bothered about something that doesn't matter to us. And our most heated arguments are almost always with friends and loved ones rather than absolute strangers.

Debates Among Early Christians

THE SAME WAS TRUE with the arguments carried out by the early Christians. As we saw in the previous chapter, Christians were in conflict with Jews and pagans over the validity of their religion. These debates were sometimes heated. They were, after all, about issues that mattered deeply to Christians. But the hottest early Christian debates were with other Christians, as they argued over the right things to believe and the right ways to live. These internal Christian debates were often filled with vitriol and hatred. Christians called one another nasty names, said ugly things about one another, and pulled out all stops to make their Christian opponents look reprehensible and stupid, denying, in many instances, that the opponents even had the right to call themselves Christian. Anyone perceived as a false teacher was subject to verbal lashing; outsiders to the faith—pagans and Jews—were treated with kid gloves by comparison.

Christian arguments with false teachers in their midst happened a lot, as far back as we have records. Our earliest Christian author was Paul, and in virtually every one of his letters it is clear that he had opponents on all sides. Many Christian

readers over the years have failed to see the significance of Paul's constant attacks on false teachers. One thing that these attacks show, beyond dispute, is that virtually everywhere Paul went, even within his own churches, he and his views were under steady assault by Christians who thought and believed differently. It is easy to miss this rather obvious historical fact, because the writings of Paul's opponents have not survived the ravages of time, whereas his writings became part of the New Testament. But if we could transport ourselves back to the 50s CE, we would find that everywhere Paul went, he confronted Christian teachers who thought he preached a false gospel. This was true even in the churches that he himself founded. And these opponents were not the same in every place; different locations produced different opponents, with different views.

Just as key examples, in the churches of Galatia, Paul's Christian opponents claimed that he had perverted the true gospel message of Jesus and his apostles when he insisted that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised and become Jewish to be followers of Jesus. Nonsense, replied his opponents. Jesus was a Jew, his followers were Jews, he taught the Jewish law, he was the Jewish messiah sent from the Jewish God to the Jewish people—following Jesus of course meant being Jewish. This view lost out in the ensuing debates, but it certainly had extensive and avid supporters in its day.

In the church of Corinth Paul's opponents insisted that he was a weak and pathetic speaker who showed no evidence of being empowered by God. They, on the other hand, had superior divine gifts demonstrating the supremacy of their message that true believers had already been raised with Christ to experience the power and joy of the heavenly existence in the here and now.

In the city of Rome Paul was maligned by Christian leaders who claimed he was not a true apostle. These Christians attacked Paul both for thinking that Gentiles were superior to Jews in the

church and for advocating a gospel that led to an immoral lifestyle.

And so it goes—at every turn Paul had opponents. We should not write these opponents off as fringe minority groups of no importance. They were everywhere, and Paul saw them as dangerous. His views eventually won out, but in his own day the differences of opinion were widespread and highly threatening. And Paul was not the only apostle under fire. In every early Christian community believers attacked other believers for their false beliefs.

This was a problem for a religion that claimed to stand for "the" truth. If the followers of Jesus represented the single, unified truth of God, why was it that the Christian church was not single and unified? In fact, it was anything but that, not just in the days of Paul, but throughout the entire first four centuries. Just in the second and third centuries, for example, we know of powerful and influential Christian teachers like Marcion who maintained that there is not just one God, but two Gods. Some Gnostics said there were 30 divine beings, or 365. These Christians claimed that they were right, and that everyone else was wrong. Had one of these other groups won the debates, the world would be a very different place today.

In the second and third centuries some Christians said that Jesus was the most righteous man who had ever lived and was chosen by God to be his messiah. But he was not at all divine. A human being can't be divine. Other Christians, again like Marcion, insisted that Christ was completely divine and not at all human. Still other Christians, including the Gnostics whom I've already mentioned, maintained that Jesus Christ was two beings: a man Jesus and a divine Christ who came into Jesus to empower him for his ministry and who then left him prior to his death, since the Christ cannot suffer. Yet other Christians said that Jesus was God the Father himself come to earth.

At this same time there were Christians who denied that God had created the world. Or had called Israel to be his people. Or had authored the Jewish Scriptures. There were other Christians who insisted that the Jewish Scriptures were sacred, but were not to be interpreted literally. Yet other Christians said that they had to be interpreted literally and followed literally, as do some even today.

Early Christians were nothing if not radically diverse. Yet all of these Christian groups claimed not only to be right, but also to be uniquely right—their view, and their view alone, represented the one and only divine truth. As a corollary, they each claimed that their view of the truth was the view taught by Jesus himself and through him to the apostles. And all of these groups had books to prove it, books allegedly written by apostles that supported their points of view.

Christians today may wonder why these various groups didn't simply read their New Testaments to see that their views were wrong. The answer, of course, is that there was no New Testament. The New Testament emerged out of these conflicts, as one of the Christian groups won the arguments and decided which books would be included in Scripture. Other books representing other points of view and also attributed to the apostles of Jesus were not only left out of Scripture; they were destroyed and forgotten. As a result, today, when we think of early Christianity, we tend to think of it only as it has come down to us in the writings of the victorious party. Only slowly, in modern times, have ancient books come to light that support alternative views, as they have turned up in archaeological digs and by pure serendipity, for example, in the sands of Egypt.

What were Christian teachers to do when they were convinced that their particular understanding of Jesus and of the faith was true, but they didn't have any apostolic writings to back it up? One thing they sometimes did—or, arguably, often did—was to

invent apostolic writings. Nothing generated more literary forgeries in the names of the apostles than the internal conflicts among competing Christian groups. These forgeries established apostolic authority for a group's own views and attacked the views of other groups. Many of the forgeries that we have already considered do so at great length, and there are others that are yet to be considered here.

Forgeries Directed Against Unknown Opponents

WHEN READING EARLY CHRISTIAN attacks on false teachers, it is often difficult to know what exactly the opponents believed. That is because in most instances we don't have any of the opponents' own writings, and so we have to reconstruct their views from what their enemies say about them. That often doesn't give one much to go on. Try to imagine reconstructing one presidential candidate's (real) views from what the other candidate says in order to attack him. This kind of reconstruction is much easier to do today, when we have mass media and extensive reporting on both sides of any issue, so that it is harder to flat-out lie about the other person's view. Politicians today, as a rule, have to be relatively sneaky. In the ancient world there was virtually nothing to stop flagrant distortion and misrepresentation. How would anyone know, without a newspaper or magazine article stating the opponents' real views?

In other instances the arguments against opponents are made for readers who have the opponents right there among them, so that both the writer and the readers know perfectly well what the opponents' views are. As a consequence, the writer feels no need to spell them out. That is fine for ancient readers who know what the author is talking about. But for those of us living two thousand years later it can be very frustrating. We get only hints at

the character of the false teaching and have to do our best to stitch it together from what little we're told.

In yet other instances an author may attack false views that he himself has made up simply as a foil for his own thoughts. This is especially the case with forged writings in which the author pretends to be living in an earlier age. The false teachings attacked are not necessarily views that anyone held. They are simply an alternative perspective that the author maligns in order to set out the "truth" of his point of view.

We have to contend with all such cases when dealing with the forged writings of early Christianity, including those of the New Testament. Several writings attack false teachings, but it is well nigh impossible to say what the opponents actually believed, if in fact they really existed at all.

COLOSSIANS

This is the case with the letter to the Colossians, written in Paul's name but almost certainly pseudonymous, as we saw in Chapter 3. The author, whoever he was, urges his readers not to be led astray by false teaching: "See that no one makes you prey through philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the cosmos and not according to Christ" (2:8). He goes on to charge his readers with what they should and should not believe and with what religious practices they should and should not engage in. But whom is he arguing against?

This is a classic case of scholars having almost no way to know. Not that that has stopped anyone from trying. One scholar writing in 1973 pointed out that there were forty-four different scholarly opinions about what the false teachers under attack stood for.[1] In a five-year stretch in the early 1990s there were four major books written on the subject by expert scholars; they

each represented a different view.[2] My view is that we'll never know for sure.

What we can say is that the author portrays these false teachers, whether they really existed or not, as urging their Christian readers in the worship of angels, basing their views on divine visions they had had. They also allegedly urged their followers to lead an ascetic lifestyle, avoiding certain foods and drinks, and observing, probably, Jewish Sabbaths and festivals (thus 2:16–18, 21–23). The author, claiming to be Paul, is opposed to all this. He thinks Christ alone is to be worshiped, for in Christ (not in angels) can be found the complete embodiment of the divine. Moreover, those who are "in Christ" have already experienced the benefits of the resurrection; there is no need for them to engage in ascetic practices.

Why would an author claim to be Paul in order to attack these unknown opponents? Evidently because doing so allowed the author to malign people he disagreed with while setting out his own point of view, even though his view is, in fact, different from Paul's, as we saw in Chapter 3.

JUDE

Consider next the New Testament book of Jude. This short book is even more obviously directed against false teachers in the Christian community. After greeting his readers, the author explains the reason for his letter:

> Beloved,...I found it necessary to write to you in order to exhort you to struggle for the faith that was delivered to the saints once and for all. For some people have secretly snuck in who were written about long ago as being subject to this condemnation. They are unholy people who corrupt

> the grace of our God, changing it into licentiousness, denying our Lord Jesus Christ. (vv. 3–4)

Here the opponents are described in rather nasty terms, but the terms get nastier as you progress through the letter. One point worth emphasizing is that even though these opponents have come into the Christian community (as members), they deny Christ. This should not be taken to mean that they deny being Christian. Quite the contrary, they are portrayed as Christian teachers. By saying that they deny Christ the author is claiming that they aren't really Christians, because what they teach is false. It is not too hard to imagine that they would say the same thing about him. But his writing became Scripture. Their writings, if they ever existed, were forever lost.

In any event, throughout this book the author has nothing good to say about the opponents. They defile the flesh (whatever that means), reject authority, and revile the holy angels. They are irrational animals, they carouse together, and they are "waterless clouds" and "fruitless trees, twice dead, uprooted." They are ungodly and do ungodly deeds; they are "grumblers, fault-finders, following their own passions, who boast with loud mouths" (vv. 8–16).

Here again it is hard to say if the author is attacking a real, historical group. He certainly is filled with vitriol for his enemies, but it is impossible to put together a coherent picture of what these people actually taught, based on the rapid-fire name-calling that the author engages in. Possibly the original readers of the book knew exactly whom he was referring to and what they taught. Or possibly the author is simply using an imaginary set of enemies to set up a foil for his own teaching about the true nature of Christian faith, which was "once and for all handed over to the saints" (v. 3). In either event, in his attempt to attack falsehood, the author himself has apparently committed

deception. He claims to be Jude (v. 1), and by this claim he seems to be saying that he is the brother of Jesus.

Five persons are named Jude (or Judas—same Greek word) in the New Testament, the most infamous of whom, of course, is Judas Iscariot. One of the others is Jude, the son of Mary and Joseph the carpenter, one of the four brothers of Jesus mentioned in Mark 6:4. The author of this short letter is almost certainly claiming to be that particular Jude, because he identifies himself as "Jude, the brother of James." Since most ancient people did not have last names, an author with a common name would typically identify himself (so that you would know *which* Jude he was) by mentioning a known relative, almost always his father. But here the author names not his father, but his brother, James. This must mean that James is the member of the family who is particularly well known.

And what James in the early church was especially well known? The most famous James was the head of the first church, the church in Jerusalem. This James was the brother of Jesus, mentioned throughout the New Testament, for example, by the apostle Paul on several occasions (see Gal. 1:19). If this Jude is identifying himself as the brother of *that* James, then he is, by implication, obviously the brother of Jesus.

But it is almost certain that the historical Jude did not write this book. Its author is living during a later period in the history of the church, when the churches are already well established, and when false teachers have infiltrated them and need to be rooted out. In fact, the author speaks of "remembering the predictions of the apostles" (v. 17) as if they, the apostles, lived a long time before. In contrast to them, he is living in "the last days" that they predicted (v. 18). This is someone living after the apostolic age.

There is another reason for being relatively certain that Jude did not write the book (referred to earlier, in Chapter 2). Like the

lower-class Galilean peasant Peter, the lower-class Galilean peasant Jude could almost certainly not write. Let alone write in Greek. Let alone compose a rhetorically effective letter evidencing detailed knowledge of ancient Jewish texts in Greek. This is an author claiming to be Jude in order to get Christians to read his book and to stand opposed to false teachers who hold a different view of the faith.

Forgeries in Opposition to Paul

PAUL WAS A LIGHTNING ROD for controversy not only during his own lifetime, but also afterward. Some Christians saw him as the greatest authority of the early church, whose vision of Christ on the road to Damascus authorized him to proclaim the true understanding of the gospel. Others saw him as an outsider to the apostolic band, an interloper who transformed the original message of Jesus and his apostles into a different religion far removed from the truth.

We have already seen that supporters of Paul forged letters in his name. These pseudonymous authors obviously felt that Paul's authority could prove persuasive in the context of the various controversies and struggles the Christian community was encountering. So we have a range of Pauline writings that he did not in fact write: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, *3 Corinthians,* letters to Seneca, and no doubt numerous other letters that have not survived from the early church.

But Paul's detractors also produced forgeries. In these cases, the pseudonymous writings countered Paul's teachings, or at least teachings that were thought to be Paul's teachings, whether they actually represented the views of the historical Paul or not. These forgeries were not, of course, written in Paul's name, but in

the names of other authorities of high repute, who cast aspersions either directly or indirectly on the so-called apostle to the Gentiles.

THE NONCANONICAL *EPISTLE OF PETER*

One of these we have already considered in Chapter 2, the *Epistle of Peter,* which appears as a kind of introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementine Writings*. This letter presupposes what was widely assumed in the ancient church and is still assumed by many scholars and laypeople today: Peter and Paul did not see eye to eye on the true gospel message.

The historical Paul himself indicates in his authentic writings that he and Peter were sometimes at odds. This is nowhere clearer than in Paul's letter to the Galatians, where he indicates that Peter chose not to share meals with Gentile (formerly pagan) Christians in the city of Antioch when Jewish Christians arrived in town (see 2:11–14). Presumably Peter thought these visitors would be offended by his decision not to keep kosher. Peter's withdrawal from Gentiles (to keep kosher) may have been simply an attempt not to make waves among Jewish believers who thought it was important for Jews to maintain their Jewish identity even after becoming followers of Jesus. For Paul, on the other hand, Peter's withdrawal was an affront to the gospel. This gospel, in his view, proclaimed that Jew and Gentile were equal before God in Christ and that there was no need for followers of Jesus to follow the law, including kosher food laws.

Paul confronted Peter in public and called him a hypocrite for eating with the Gentiles when no Jewish brothers were present, but refusing to do so when they arrived. It is very unfortunate indeed that we don't know how Peter replied or who, in the general opinion, got the better of the argument. All we know is Paul's side, as he reports it in the letter to the Galatians. But it is clear

that he and Peter were sometimes at odds, and it is not at all clear that they ever reconciled over the issue.

This tension between Peter and Paul over the keeping of the law, as we have seen, is very much at issue in the noncanonical *Epistle of Peter,* where the author, claiming to be Peter, but actually writing long after his death, attacks a person whom he calls his "enemy." This enemy has preached a "lawless gospel to the Gentiles," that is, a gospel that says one is made right with God apart from the law. This personal enemy of Peter has falsely claimed that he, Peter, agrees with his false understanding of the faith. "Peter," however, does not agree with it and attacks his enemy for claiming that he does.

This, then, is a thinly veiled attack on Paul written by a Jewish Christian who thought that it was proper, and even necessary, for Jews who believed in Jesus to continue observing the Jewish law. Failing to do so meant a breech in true religion. Paul, for this author, is not an apostolic authority. He is a false preacher.

THE *PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE WRITINGS*

A similar teaching is found in the *Pseudo-Clementine Writings* themselves.[3] If you will recall, these are a set of long narratives allegedly written by Clement, the fourth bishop of Rome (i.e., the pope), in which he describes his travels, his meeting with the apostle Peter, and his conversion to become a follower of Jesus. Most of the books narrate his subsequent adventures while participating with Peter on his missionary journeys. In particular these accounts relate how Peter engaged in conflicts and miracle contests with Simon the Magician, who claimed to be the true representative of God, but who, according to Peter, was a false teacher. In some passages of these books it is clear that Simon is understood to be someone else—Peter's real-life enemy, the apostle Paul.

Nowhere is this more clear than in several passages in the *Pseudo-Clementine Writings* known as the *Homilies*.[4] In one passage Peter elaborates God's way of dealing with the world from the very beginning. Peter points out that there have often been pairs of people who appear in sacred history. The first to appear is always the inferior of the two. So, for example, the first children born to Adam and Eve were the wicked Cain (first) and the righteous Abel (second). So too the father of the Jews, Abraham, had two children: the firstborn, Ishmael, who was not to inherit the promises, and then Isaac, who was. Isaac then had two sons, Esau, the profane, and Jacob, the pious. And on and on through history.

This pattern applies to the Christian mission field, argues "Peter." The first missionary to the Gentiles was "Simon" (i.e., Paul); he was necessarily inferior. The second, the superior, was Peter himself, who claims, "I have come after him [Simon/Paul] and have come in upon him as light upon darkness, as knowledge upon ignorance, as healing upon disease" (2.17). Not a very affirming portrayal of Paul! Peter has followed in Paul's missionary path, straightening out everything that Paul had gotten wrong.

A second passage is even more condemning. As is well known, Paul was often said to have been commissioned to be an apostle by Christ in the vision he had on the road to Damascus (see Acts 9). Paul was not one of the original followers of Jesus. On the contrary, he started out as a persecutor of the Christian church. But then Christ appeared to him and converted him, telling him to become his missionary to the Gentiles. Paul himself, the historical Paul, took this commissioning with the utmost seriousness and claimed in books such as Galatians that, since he received his gospel message directly from Jesus, he was beholden to no one. Anyone who preached a message contrary to his message was advocating falsehood rather than truth (Gal. 1:6–9). He, Paul, had the truth from Christ himself. And among other things,

this truth was that Gentiles were not to adopt the Jewish law in order to find salvation in Christ (thus Gal. 2:15–16).

The author of the *Pseudo-Clementines* heartily disagrees and portrays Peter himself as mocking Paul for his claims to have direct access to the teachings of Jesus, based on a single brief vision. In *Homily* 17 Peter says to "Simon" (i.e., Paul):

> You alleged that…you knew more satisfactorily the doctrines of Jesus than I do because you heard His words through an apparition…. But he who trusts to apparition or vision and dream is insecure. For he does not know to whom he is trusting. For it is possible either that he may be an evil demon or a deceptive spirit, pretending in his speeches to be what he is not.

Visions cannot be trusted, because you have no way of knowing, really, what you are seeing. So if Paul's authority is rooted exclusively in a vision, it is no authority at all.

Peter continues with an argument that would seem hard to refute:

> Can anyone be rendered fit for instruction through apparitions? And if you will say, "It is possible," then I ask, "Why did our teacher abide and discourse a whole year to those who were awake?" And how are we to believe your word, when you tell us that He appeared to you? And how did He appear to you, when you entertain opinions contrary to His teaching? But if you were seen and taught by Him, and became His apostle for a single hour, proclaim His utterances, interpret His saying, love His apostles, contend not with me who accompanied Him. For in direct opposition to me, who am a firm rock, the foundation of the Church, you now stand.

Paul may have had a brief vision of Jesus. But Peter was with him for months—a year!—not asleep and dreaming, but awake, listening to his every word. And Jesus himself declared that it was Peter, not Paul, who was the "Rock" on whom the church would be built. Paul is a late interloper whose authority rests on entirely dubious grounds. It is the teachings of Peter that are to be followed, not those of Paul.

Whether or not this is the view of the historical Peter is something we will probably never know. But it is certainly the view of Peter set forth in the forged writings known as the *Pseudo-Clementines*.

JAMES

In the New Testament itself we find a book that appears to attack Paul's teachings, or at least a later misinterpretation of Paul's teachings. This is a letter that claims to be written by someone named James. In the early church it was widely assumed that this James was the brother of Jesus.

James was known throughout the history of the early church to have been firmly committed to his Jewish roots and heritage, even as a follower of Jesus.[5] According to the New Testament he was not a disciple of Jesus during his lifetime (see John 7:5), but he was one of the first to see the resurrected Jesus after his death (1 Cor. 15:7), and because of that, presumably, he came to believe in him. No doubt it was his filial connection that elevated him to a position of authority in the church.

The apostle Paul, who personally knew James (Gal. 1:19), indicates that he was committed to keeping the Jewish law and appears to have insisted that the other Jewish followers of Jesus do so as well (2:12). He was well known for his great piety; one early source indicates that he prayed so often and at such length that his knees became as calloused as a camel's. The best historical

records indicate that he died around 62 CE, after heading the Jerusalem church for thirty years.

James was a very common name among Jews in first-century Palestine, and among Christians as well. A number of people named James are in the New Testament. Matthew 10:3–4 indicates that two of Jesus's twelve disciples had the name. To differentiate the two Jameses, normally they are given additional identity markers, such as "James the son of Zebedee" or "James the son of Alphaeus." The author of the book of James, however, does not identify himself further, suggesting he expected his readers to know which James he was. There seems to be little doubt, then, that he is claiming to be the most famous James of all, Jesus's brother. This view is corroborated by the fact that he writes his letter to the "twelve tribes in the Dispersion," a reference to the twelve tribes of Israel who are scattered throughout the Roman world. James, the chief Jewish Christian, is writing to the dispersed Jewish Christians.

The book contains a number of ethical admonitions that urge readers to live in ways appropriate for the followers of Jesus. They are to have faith and not to doubt; to endure trials, be slow to anger, watch their tongues, control their desires and not to show partiality, be jealous or ambitious, seek wealth, or show favoritism to the wealthy, and so on. Many of these admonitions seem to reflect the teachings of Jesus himself, for example, from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7).

The author is particularly concerned with one issue, however, an issue that reflects a bone of contention with other Christians. Some Christians are evidently saying that to be right with God, all you need is faith; for them, doing "good works" is irrelevant to salvation, so long as you believe. James thinks this is precisely wrong, that if you do not do good deeds, then you obviously don't have faith:

> What use is it, my brothers, if a person says he has faith but has no works? Is faith able to save him? If a brother or sister is naked and has no daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and be filled,” without giving them what their bodies need, what use is that? So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead, being by itself. (2:14–17)

The author goes on to argue that having faith apart from works cannot bring salvation and in fact is worthless. This is shown above all by the example of Abraham, father of the Jews, who was saved by what he did, not just by what he believed:

> But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from works and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one? You do well: even the demons believe, and they shudder. But do you wish to know, O shallow man, that faith apart from works is barren? Wasn’t Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works and faith was completed by the works. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” And he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works, and not by faith alone. (2:18–24)

Here, then, is a sharp invective against anyone who maintains that it is faith alone that can put a person into a right standing before God (in James’s words, that can “justify” a person). His evidence is Abraham, and the Scripture he quotes in support is Genesis 15:6: “And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

One of the reasons this passage is significant is that it sounds almost like a parody of something that Paul himself wrote, earlier, in his letter to the Galatians, when he was trying to convince his Gentile readers that they did not have to do the works of the law in order to be justified (be made right with God), but that faith in Christ alone was all that was needed. What is most striking is that Paul tries to demonstrate his case by referring specifically to Abraham and by quoting Genesis 15:6. Here is what Paul writes:

> We know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ; so we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because no one will be justified by works of the law.... Thus Abraham "believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness." You see therefore that those who have faith are the children of Abraham. (Gal. 2:16; 3:6–7)

For centuries scholars of the New Testament have maintained that the book of James is responding to the teaching of Galatians. Paul taught that it was faith in Christ that put people into a right relationship with God, independently of whether or not they did the works of the law. James insisted that works were needed, that faith alone could not bring justification. The two authors use the same language ("justify," "faith," "works"), they appeal to the same Old Testament figure, Abraham, and they both cite the same verse, Genesis 15:6. Since Martin Luther at the beginning of the Reformation, some interpreters have insisted that James is contradicting Paul. Luther's conclusion was that James had gotten it precisely wrong.

More recent scholars, however, have called this reading of James into question. In large measure that is because, even though the letter uses the same terms as Paul, James

demonstrably means something different by these terms. When Paul uses the term "faith," as we saw in an earlier context, he means something relational by it; faith in Christ means trusting that Christ's death and resurrection can restore a person to a right standing before God. This, for Paul, comes "apart from the works of the law," meaning that one does not have to do the works prescribed by the Jewish law in order to trust Christ. One does not need to observe the Sabbath, keep kosher food laws, be circumcised if male, and so on.

James means something different, however, by both "faith" and "works." For him, faith does not have the relational meaning of "trusting someone." It refers to intellectual assent to a proposition: "Even the demons believe [God is one], and they shudder" (2:19). In other words, even demons know that there is only one real God, but it doesn't do them any good. This decidedly does not mean that the demons trust God; they simply have the intellectual knowledge of his existence. Faith—intellectual assent to the propositions of the Christian religion—will not save anyone, according to James. But would Paul disagree with *that*? Probably not.

Even more striking, when James speaks of "works," he is not referring to actions required by the Jewish law: Sabbath observance, kosher food requirements, and so on. He is clearly talking about good deeds: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked (the two examples he gives), and so on. For James, an intellectual assent to Christianity that does not manifest itself in how one lives is of no use. It can't save a soul.

And so the book of James may seem to be contradicting Paul, but it is not really contradicting him. What is one to make of that? Actually it is not too difficult to see what happened historically. In Chapter 3 we saw that there were later authors, such as the author of Ephesians, who claimed to be Paul, but who transformed his teaching that the works of the Jewish law could not

bring salvation into a teaching that said "good works" could not save (see Eph. 2:8–9; see also Titus 3:5). For an author like the pseudonymous writer of Ephesians, doing good deeds does not contribute to making a person right with God. James therefore is reacting not to what Paul said but to what later Christians misunderstood Paul as saying.

These later Pauline Christians interpreted Paul's argument that it was faith, not works, that justified to mean that it doesn't matter what you do or how you live. It matters only what you believe. Paul's teaching on "works of the law" was taken to be a general principle about "good deeds." And Paul's teaching about "trust in Christ" was altered into a teaching about "what to believe." For these later Christians, then, what mattered was your belief, not your life. They thought this teaching came from Paul, and so they too appealed to Abraham, the father of all believers, and to Genesis 15:6, which indicated that Abraham was justified by his faith, not his works. James reacted against that by arguing the opposite: you can't have true faith without it being reflected in how you live your life. "Faith without works is dead."

This, then, was another controversy over the teachings of Paul as they came to be reinterpreted in his churches after his day. James does not name Paul explicitly, but it is perfectly clear that his teachings are what he has in mind, at least as they were being interpreted in his day. But was he really James, or was he someone else claiming to be James?

There are excellent reasons for thinking that this letter was not written by the brother of Jesus, but was forged in his name. For one thing, the teaching being opposed must have arisen later than the writings of Paul. That is to say, it is a later development of Pauline thinking in a later Pauline community. The teaching is indeed similar to the teaching found in Ephesians, written after Paul's lifetime in his name. But it goes even farther than Ephesians, since the author of Ephesians would never have said that

it didn't matter how you lived so long as you have faith. Just the opposite in fact! (See Eph. 2:10.) Whoever is writing the book of James is presupposing an even later situation found among Paul's churches. But since the historical James was probably martyred in 62 CE, two decades or so before Ephesians was written, the book could not very well have been written by him.

Moreover, the one thing we know best about James of Jerusalem is that he was concerned that Jewish followers of Jesus continue to keep the requirements of Jewish law. But this concern is completely and noticeably missing in this letter. This author, claiming to be James, is concerned with people doing "good deeds" he is not at all concerned with keeping kosher, observing the Sabbath and Jewish festivals, or circumcision. His concerns are not those of James of Jerusalem.

The real clincher, though, is one we have seen before in relation to both Peter and Jude. This author has written a very fluent and rhetorically effective composition in Greek. He is intimately familiar with the Greek version of the Old Testament. The historical James, on the other hand, was an Aramaic-speaking peasant from Galilee who almost certainly never learned to read. Or if he did learn to read, it was to read Hebrew. If he ever learned Greek, it would have been as a second language in order to speak it, haltingly no doubt. He never would have gone to school. He never would have become proficient in Greek. He never would have learned how to write, even in his native language, let alone a second tongue. He never would have studied the Greek Old Testament. He never would have taken Greek composition classes. He never would have become skilled in Greek rhetoric.

This book was not written by an illiterate Aramaic-speaking Jew. Whoever wrote it claimed to be James, because that would best accomplish his objective: to stress that followers of Jesus need to manifest their faith in their lives, doing good deeds that show forth their faith, since without works faith is dead.

JUST AS THERE WERE forgers who wanted to emphasize that Paul stood at odds with the Jerusalem disciples Peter and James and that Paul, therefore, misinterpreted the Christian message, there were others who took Paul's side and wanted to argue that he was in perfect harmony with the teachings of Peter and James, and that all three, therefore, were on the side of truth. This is at least one of the overarching points of two of the books we already considered in Chapter 2, 1 and 2 Peter, as well as a book that scholars have as a rule been loath to label a forgery, even though that is what it appears to be—the New Testament book of Acts.

1 Peter

We have seen a number of reasons for thinking that, whoever wrote 1 Peter, it was not actually Peter. There are, however, additional reasons, two of which relate to my claim, here, that the book was written to show that Peter and Paul were completely simpatico. The first has to do with the audience of the letter. The one thing we know about the historical Peter's missionary activities is that he went to the Jews in order to try to convert them to believe in Christ. When Paul met with the "Jerusalem apostles" (Peter, James, and John), they agreed that just as Peter was in charge of the mission to the Jews, Paul would go to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:6–9). What is striking about 1 Peter is that it is written to Gentiles, not Jews (2:10; 4:3–4). But that's Paul's area, not Peter's. Moreover, the geographical destination of the letter is Paul's. The letter is directed to Christians living in five regions of Asia Minor, a place where Paul had started churches. Nothing connects the historical Peter with these places.

These features of the letter seem less odd when seen in the total context of what the letter is trying to accomplish. Not only is it providing comfort to those who are suffering for their faith; in doing so it is trying to make Peter sound like Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles in Asia Minor. Why would it want to do that? Surely it is for reasons we have seen: there were other Christians who maintained, even in the churches of Asia Minor, that Peter and Paul were at each other's throats and represented different understandings of the gospel. Not for the author of 1 Peter. He writes a letter in the name of Peter that sounds very much like a letter of Paul.

The two people that the pseudonymous author names in the letter, Silvanus and Mark (5:12–13), are otherwise known as companions of Paul (see, e.g., 1 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 24). The use of Scripture in the letter is very similar to the way Paul uses Scripture; Hosea 2:25 is quoted in 2:10, for example, to show that Gentiles are now the people of God, just as Paul uses the same verse in Romans 9:25. The moral exhortations of the letter sound like Paul's; for example, Christians are to be "subject to every human institution," as in Romans 13:1–7. And most important, the theology espoused in the letter is the theology of Paul. Just as isolated examples, which could be multiplied many times over: it is faith that leads to salvation (1:9); the end of all things is at hand (4:7); and the death of Christ brings salvation from sins (2:24; 3:18). These may all sound like things every Christian could well say. But when you look at the actual wording of the passages, you would be hard pressed at times to say that this isn't straight from Paul: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (2:24); "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (3:18).

It is not convincing to mount a counterargument by saying this letter contains some differences from Paul's own letters as

well. One can argue that about all of Paul's undisputed letters; each one has distinctive things to say. The point is that this letter forged in the name of Peter appears to go out of its way to embrace views attested otherwise for Paul. Here we have a forger who wants to insist that the two great apostles of the church were completely on the same page in their understanding of the gospel, in the face of other Christians who argued that they were at odds with one another.

2 Peter

Something similar can be said of 2 Peter. In this case the author goes even farther out of his way to insist that he is Peter, as he not only names himself "Simeon Peter" in 1:1, but stresses that he was personally present with Jesus on the mount at the transfiguration: "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty…for we were with him on the holy mountain" (2:16–19). This really is Peter! And he really likes Paul! In fact, he more than likes Paul—he thinks Paul's letters are Scripture.

As we have seen, 2 Peter stresses that even though a long time has passed since Jesus declared that the end of all things would be "soon," everything is in fact going according to plan. Soon in God's calendar is not the same as soon in ours, for "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (2:8). God has in fact put off the time of the end in order to provide more time for more people to be saved: "Consider the patience of our Lord as salvation." This, claims the author, is taught by "our beloved brother Paul," who, we are told, "wrote to you according to the wisdom that was given to him, speaking about these thing in all his letters, in which there are matters hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do with the rest of the Scriptures" (3:15–16).

There are several important points here. Paul is Peter's "beloved brother." They agree on all essential points. Other Christians have misinterpreted ("twisted") Paul's letters. They do this as well with the "other" Scriptures. Among other things, this means that "Peter" considers the letters of Paul to be Scripture. For this author, then, if anyone interprets Paul's letters to mean that he and Peter disagree, they have flat-out misinterpreted the letters. Paul's letters speak the truth, and Peter agrees with them.

Except, of course, that the person who wrote this letter was not actually Peter, but someone later claiming to be Peter. One of the ultimate goals of this pseudonymous writer is perfectly clear: he very much wanted his readers to think that the apostle to the Jews and the apostle to the Gentiles had no differences of opinion.

The Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles is the earliest surviving account we have of the spread of Christianity in the years immediately after the death of Jesus. It is a historical narrative that tries to explain how Christianity moved geographically from its beginnings in the city of Jerusalem, throughout Judea, into Samaria, and then into other parts of the Roman Empire, until it finally reached the city of Rome itself. But Acts is concerned not only with the geographical spread of the religion, but also with what you might call its "ethnic" spread. The author is particularly interested in the question of how the Jewish religion of Jesus and his followers became a religion adopted by Gentiles, non-Jews. Given the author's interest in the conversion of former pagans to the new faith, it is no surprise that the ultimate hero of the story is Paul, known in the early church as the apostle to the Gentiles par excellence.

Paul in this narrative does not start out as a follower of Jesus, however. Quite the contrary. As the budding Christian church

grows by fits and starts in its early months through the preaching of such empowered apostles as Peter, who is the main character of the book's first twelve chapters, it also incurs the hatred of Jews who refuse to convert and see the newfound religion as blasphemous and dangerous. Eventually the chief opponent of the new faith is Saul of Tarsus, a highly religious Jew who is authorized to hunt down and imprison anyone who professes faith in Christ.

But then in one of the greatest turn-arounds in early Christian history—or in all of history, some would argue—the great persecutor of the faith becomes its most powerful preacher. En route to persecute Christians in the city of Damascus Paul has a vision of the resurrected Jesus and comes to believe that the faith he had once opposed is true (Acts 9). After meeting with those who were apostles before him—Peter and others—Paul devotes himself as zealously to propagating the new faith as he had once devoted himself to oppressing it. Paul travels throughout the Mediterranean regions of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia (modern Turkey and Greece), visiting major urban areas, preaching the gospel, converting mainly Gentiles, and starting churches.

Early in his missionary work a major point of contention arises among the leaders of the church, however. Don't the Gentiles who are coming to believe in Jesus need to convert to Judaism, if they are to be followers of the Jewish messiah? Don't they need to be circumcised and to keep the Jewish law? Some of the Christian leaders think that the answer is yes; others think the answer is no. Peter himself, in this story, firmly thinks no. In no small measure this is because, even before Paul's missionary journeys, God has revealed to Peter, personally, in a vision, that Gentiles are to be accepted into the faith without becoming Jews (Acts 10–11). Peter in fact is the first to convert a Gentile.

And so when a church conference is called to decide the matter in Acts 15, halfway through the narrative, there are some

outside, unnamed spokespersons for the view that Gentile converts should be required to keep the law. But the main insiders—not just Paul, but also Peter and James, head of the Jerusalem church—are completely on the other side and stand shoulder to shoulder in insisting that the salvation of Christ has gone to the Gentiles, who do not have to accept the Jewish law in order to be saved.

Newly authorized by this unified decision, Paul goes back to the mission field and establishes more churches, before running into trouble with the Jewish authorities during a visit to Jerusalem. Most of the final third of the book of Acts deals with Paul's imprisonment and trials as he attempts to defend himself, insisting that he has not been doing anything contrary to the Jewish law. He, instead, has always supported the law in preaching that Jesus himself is the Jewish messiah who has been raised from the dead (even though he thinks Gentiles are not required to keep the law). Paul eventually appeals to present his case before the Roman emperor, as he is entitled to do as a Roman citizen. The book ends with his journey to Rome and his house arrest there, where he is shown preaching to all who will hear while waiting for his trial.

As should be clear from this summary, one of the overarching themes of Acts is that Peter, the hero of the first third of the book, and Paul, the hero of the rest, were completely aligned in every respect. They agreed on the practical question of whether Gentiles should be required to keep the Jewish law; they agreed on the need and approach to the mission to convert Gentiles; they agreed on every theological issue. To this extent the book of Acts lines up very nicely with the two other books of the New Testament we have already considered, 1 and 2 Peter, and against a number of books from outside the New Testament, such as the *Epistle of Peter* and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*. One could also argue that it stands at odds with what Paul

himself had to say in the book of Galatians, where Peter is not treated in a friendly way.

As it turns out, there are many other differences between what the book of Acts says about Paul and what Paul says about himself in his letters. I won't go into all the gory details here, as they are more fully discussed in other places that are easily accessible.[6] Just with respect to Galatians, though, I might point out that, whereas Acts is quite clear that Peter realized, even before Paul did, that it was a good and right thing to share meals with Gentiles who did not keep kosher, in Galatians 2 this is precisely what Peter refuses to do when Jewish "brothers" show up in town. One could argue that Paul was right, that Peter was simply being hypocritical. But there is nothing in Galatians to suggest that Peter actually saw it this way or that he thought Paul was right about the matter. The historical Peter may have thought that sharing meals with Gentiles when Jews were around was wrong. If so, then the historical Peter thought differently from the way the Peter of the book of Acts thought.

There are other differences between Acts and Galatians that are even harder to reconcile. Here I'll mention just two. In Galatians Paul tries to convince his Gentile readers that it would be an enormous mistake if they were to become circumcised and begin following the Jewish law. He wants to insist that his understanding of this matter came directly from God, in the revelation he had of Christ that turned him into a follower. He did not—he emphatically and decidedly did not—get this message from those who were apostles before him, Peter, James, and the others. In fact, he stresses, after the vision of Christ that converted him, he did not even go to Jerusalem to talk with the apostles. He went away into Arabia, then back to Damascus, and did not go to Jerusalem for another three years (1:15–19). This makes the story of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts very interesting. Here we are told that Paul is blinded by his vision of Jesus on the road to

Damascus; he then enters the city and regains his sight. And what's the very first thing he does when he leaves town? He makes a beeline straight to Jerusalem to see the apostles (Acts 9:1–26). Well, which is it? Did he stay away from Jerusalem, as Paul himself says, or did he go there first thing, as Acts says?

Moreover, whom does he see there? Paul insists in Galatians 1:18–19 that in his fifteen-day visit he saw only two people, Peter and James, the brother of Jesus. Paul is emphatic on this point, which he stresses by swearing an oath: "What I am writing to you, before God, I am not lying!" (1:19–20). It's not clear why he wants to stress the point so strongly. Is it because he doesn't want anyone to think that his message was passed along to him by the original disciples of Jesus, most of whom he never met? In any event, what is clear is the contrast with Acts. There, when Paul arrives in Jerusalem directly after being converted, he meets with apostles and spends some time among them—not just with Peter and James, but apparently with all of them (9:26–30).

These differences between what Acts says about Paul and what Paul says about himself can be multiplied time and again, especially if we were to turn to Pauline letters other than Galatians. One reason the differences matter is that Paul wants to distance himself from the apostles to claim that his message came directly from Christ, not from those who were apostles before him. The book of Acts, on the other hand, wants to insist that Paul conferred with the other apostles before he started taking his message out into the mission field. Moreover, for Paul the other apostles gave him no message that Christ had not already revealed to him. If the others, even Peter and James, disagreed with him, then they were disagreeing not with him, but with God, who had revealed himself to Paul through Christ. For Acts, on the other hand, there is no possibility of Paul and the others disagreeing. God informed them all equally of the truth of the gospel, and they all preach the gospel. It is the same message, the

same theology, the same practical conclusions: they are all on the same page, up and down the line.

The other reason the differences between Paul and Acts matter is because Acts claims to be written by someone who was a companion of Paul. But given the numerous discrepancies between Paul's letters and the book of Acts, that looks highly unlikely. The author of Acts never names himself, and to that extent he is writing anonymously. But church tradition, starting about a century after the book was written, attributed the book to someone named Luke. And why Luke?

The reasoning is a bit complicated, but it goes like this. The first important point to make is that the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, both of them anonymous, were written by the same author. This is shown by their similar theological views, their shared vocabulary and writing style, and such clear indications as the opening verses of the two books, both of which are dedicated to someone named Theophilus. The second book actually indicates that it is the second of two books written to this person. Almost certainly, then, the author of Acts is the author of Luke. Acts is the second volume of a two-volume work.

But why think it was written by someone named Luke? Even though the Gospel of Luke gives no hint as to its author, there are clues that surely must be intentional in the book of Acts. In four passages of Acts the author stops speaking in the third person about what "they" (Paul and his companions) were doing and starts speaking about what "we" were doing (16:10–17; 20:5–16; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16). This is someone who is claiming to have been with Paul as a traveling companion during his missionary journeys. But he doesn't say who he is.[7]

Readers over the centuries have thought, however, that his identity could be inferred. This author is someone who is especially concerned with the Gentile mission of the early church and who is particularly invested in showing that Gentiles do not have

to become Jews in order to be Christian. It is sensible to conclude that this person was probably himself a Gentile. So now we are narrowing the matter down a bit; the author is allegedly a Gentile traveling companion of Paul. Do we know of any such persons?

In the letter to the Colossians we learn of three persons who were Gentile companions of Paul: Epaphras, Demas, and Luke the physician (Col. 4:12–14). Of these three, it seems unlikely that Demas could be the author, since we learn elsewhere that Demas "abandoned" Paul (2 Tim. 2:10). Epaphras appears to have been known as the founder of the church in Colossae (Col. 1:5–7), a church that is never mentioned in Acts. That would be odd, if its founder were the author. This leaves then one candidate, Luke the Gentile physician. So we have the age-old assumption that the book of Acts was written by Luke, a traveling companion of Paul. This assumption is found already in the late second-century church father Irenaeus. Irenaeus was writing a century after the book of Acts was produced. He is nonetheless the first surviving Christian author to make extensive reference to the book, and he indicates, based on his knowledge of the "we" passages, that "Luke was inseparable from Paul, and was his fellow-laborer in the gospel, as he himself clearly evinces."[8]

Despite this ancient tradition, the problems with identifying Luke as the author of the book are rife. For one thing, the idea that Luke was a Gentile companion of Paul comes from Colossians, a book that appears to have been forged in Paul's name after his death. To be sure, there is also a Luke named in Paul's authentic letter of Philemon (v. 24), but nothing is said there about his being a Gentile. He is simply mentioned in a list of five other people. An even bigger problem presents itself in the fact that there are so many discrepancies between what Acts says about Paul with what Paul says about himself.

I've mentioned only three of these discrepancies. There are many others.[9] They involve just about every aspect of the

historical Paul. Paul's theology and preaching differ between Acts and the letters; other differences are in Paul's attitude toward pagans, his relationship to the Jewish law, his missionary strategy, and his itinerary. At just about every point where it is possible to check what Acts says about Paul with what Paul says about himself in his authentic letters, there are discrepancies. The conclusion is hard to escape that Acts was probably not written by one of Paul's traveling companions.

But why would the author then speak in the first person on four occasions? Anyone reading this book so far should have no trouble figuring out why. The author is making a claim about himself. He is not naming himself. He is simply claiming to be a traveling companion of Paul's and therefore unusually well suited to give a "true" account of Paul's message and mission. But he almost certainly was not a companion of Paul's. On the one hand, he was writing long after Paul and his companions were dead. Scholars usually date Acts to around 85 CE or so, over two decades after Paul's death. On the other hand, he seems to be far too poorly informed about Paul's theology and missionary activities to have been someone with firsthand knowledge. If the author is claiming to be someone he is not, what kind of work is he writing? A book written with a false authorial claim is a forgery. Obviously the authorial claim in this case is not as boldfaced as in, say, 1 Timothy or *3 Corinthians,* whose authors directly say they are Paul. But the claim of Acts is clear nonetheless; the author indicates that he was a participant in and eyewitness to Paul's mission, even though he was not.

It should not be objected that if the author wanted his readers to be convinced he was a companion of Paul, he would have been a lot more explicit about his identity, that is, he necessarily would have named himself or been more emphatic in his self-identification as a cotraveler with Paul. This kind of objection about what an author "would have" done is never very persuasive. For

modern readers to tell ancient authors what they should have done in order to be more convincing is actually a bit amusing. Why should the author of Acts have done anything other than what he did? How could he possibly have been any more successful at deceiving his readers? He was spectacularly successful doing it the way he did. Readers for eighteen hundred years accepted without question that the author was none other than Luke, the traveling companion of Paul. By inserting just a small handful of first-person pronouns into his account the author succeeded in producing a forgery that continues to deceive readers down to the present day.

The reason for the forgery, in any event, is clear, or at least one of the many reasons is. This author wants his readers to think he is Paul's companion and therefore has firsthand knowledge of Paul's mission. Paul, in this account, agrees with the apostles before him, especially Peter and James, on every point of theological and practical importance. The earliest church was in firm and essential harmony. Peter and Paul were not at odds, as other authors were claiming. Together they declared that salvation has gone to the Gentiles, who do not have to be Jews in order to be Christians.

Gnostic and Anti-Gnostic Forgeries

EARLY CHRISTIAN GNOSTICISM

The most intense and vitriolic conflicts of the second and third centuries involved a variety of Christian groups that scholars have called "Gnostic." Gnostic Christianity was a remarkably complex phenomenon, but for our purposes here I need give simply a broad and basic overview.[10]

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, the term "Gnostic" comes from the Greek word *gnosis,* which means "knowledge." A wide range of early Christian groups claimed that salvation did not come from faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, but from acquiring the secret knowledge, *gnosis,* that Christ taught. This knowledge was actually self-knowledge, knowledge of who you really were, deep inside, where you came from, how you got here, and how you can return. Gnostics maintained that some of us are not just flesh-and-blood human beings. We have a spark of divinity within us that originated in the heavenly realm, but that has fallen into the material world and become trapped inside our mortal bodies. The goal of Gnostic religions was to teach the secret knowledge needed to free this element of the divine, so that it can return to its heavenly home. In the Christian forms of Gnosticism (there were non-Christian forms as well), it is Christ who comes from the heavenly realm above to provide us with this secret knowledge.

There were a large number of Gnostic groups with a mind-boggling array of different teachings and beliefs. Many of these groups described the fall of the divine sparks through complicated and confusing mythological tales that tried to explain how both the divine realm above and this material world below came into existence. Even though the myths of the various groups differed from one another significantly, many of them shared similar features.

In many of these myths the originating point of all that is was a divine being who was completely spirit; there was nothing material about him/it. This divine being generated other divinities who were manifestations of his various characteristics: silence, intellect, truth, word, life, and so on. Some of these divine beings generated yet other divine beings, until there was a populated realm of the divine. But one of these beings—in some texts it is Sophia, the Greek word for "Wisdom"—fell from the divine realm

and generated other beings who were not fully divine, since they came into existence outside of the realm of the divine. One of these other beings ignorantly thought that it was the superior God and, with the help of the others, captured its mother and created the material world as a place to imprison her, inside human bodies. This ignorant creator God is the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Jews.

So the material world we live in is not a good place; it is a place of imprisonment. The God of the Jews is not the ultimate divinity, but is inferior, ignorant, and possibly even malicious. The goal of salvation is not to be put into a right relationship with the creator God, but to escape his clutches. Salvation does not come when this fallen creation is returned to its original pristine state (a return to the Garden of Eden); it comes by escaping this material world. The end of time will not bring a salvation of the flesh; it will bring a deliverance *from* the flesh. This salvation comes when the sparks trapped within our bodies learn the secrets of how they came to be here and the knowledge of how they can escape.

Since in the Christian Gnostic systems it is Christ who comes from the divine realm to deliver this secret knowledge, he obviously could not be a part of this material world itself. He was not a fleshly being. So we have the two forms of docetic thought that I mentioned in Chapter 2. Some Gnostics maintained that Jesus only appeared to be human (like Marcion, who was not a Gnostic). Others claimed that the divine Christ entered into the man Jesus at his baptism and then left him before he died, since the Christ could not suffer. In either way of understanding Christ, he was not a real, flesh-and-blood, suffering, and dying human who was returned to the flesh at his resurrection. Like the other sparks of the divine, he escaped the flesh and the material world, which houses it, in order to return to his heavenly home.

Because Gnostics who taught such views denigrated the material world and the God who created it, they were seen as a serious threat by other Christians who maintained that there was only one God, not an entire realm of divinities; that God had made the world and that it was good, not inferior or evil; that he had formed human flesh and would redeem human flesh; and that salvation came in the body, not separate from the body. Moreover, Christian opponents of Gnosticism maintained that Christ himself was a real flesh-and-blood human being whose real suffering and death brought salvation and whose resurrection was a resurrection in the flesh, in which he now lives and will live forevermore.

These alternative anti-Gnostic views were taught by such prominent Christian authors as the second-century Irenaeus and the third-century Tertullian, authors whose writings have been known and widely read for many centuries. The Gnostics ended up losing these debates, and their own works were by and large destroyed. It is only in modern times that Gnostic writings have been discovered, most notably in a remarkable but completely serendipitous uncovering of an entire library of Gnostic texts in 1945 near the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi.[11]

This so-called Nag Hammadi library contains forty-six different documents, a few of which are in duplicate. Some of them detail the mythological views of this or that Gnostic group, others are mystical reflections on the nature of reality or of the human's place in it, others are secret revelations that Jesus delivers to his disciples after his "resurrection," and still others are collections of Jesus's earthly teachings. Some of these writings were produced in the names of the apostles. They are, in other words, Gnostic forgeries.

Gnostic Forgeries

We knew about Gnostic forgeries for a long time before we actually had any of them. The fourth-century heresy hunter Epiphanius, for example, in a book that attacks eighty different groups of "heretics," talks about one particularly nefarious Gnostic group that he calls the Phibionites. In his attack on this group Epiphanius reports that they used a whole range of pseudonymous writings, including a *Gospel of Eve,* the *Lesser Questions of Mary (Magdalene),* the *Greater Questions of Mary,* the *Books of Seth,* the *Apocalypses of Adam,* the *Birth of Mary,* and the *Gospel of Philip*.[12] The *Gospel of Philip* was discovered at Nag Hammadi, although it is impossible to know whether it is the same book that Epiphanius was referring to. We also have a writing called the *Birth of Mary,* but there is nothing Gnostic about it, and so it too may be a different book. None of the other books survives.[13]

But plenty of other Gnostic forgeries do. Among the Nag Hammadi writings that set forth Gnostic views in the names of the apostles is a *Secret Book of John* (i.e., the son of Zebedee), which lays out in graphic detail one version of the Gnostic myth, and an *Apocalypse of Paul,* which describes a mystical ascent of the apostle through the heavens, narrated in the first person. There are two apocalypses of James and the aforementioned *Gospel of Philip*. And most famously of all there is the *Gospel of Thomas,* a collection of 114 sayings of Jesus allegedly recorded by Judas Didymus Thomas, who was reputed in some regions of the early church to have been the twin brother of Jesus.[14]

Rather than discuss all the Gnostic forgeries here, I will consider just two, which are particularly interesting, because they not only attest a Gnostic point of view, but also argue against the view that eventually became "orthodox," that is, the view represented by such authors as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, which was eventually accepted as "true" over against the teachings of "false gnosis."

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

We have already seen one *Apocalypse of Peter* in Chapter 2. At Nag Hammadi a second one was discovered, a secret revelation given to Simon Peter.[15] The one we already examined emphasized strongly the bodily nature of the afterlife, where people are blissfully rewarded or horrifically punished, physically, for how they lived in this life. The *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* takes a radically different view, arguing that those who believe in the importance of the flesh, whether Christ's own flesh or the fleshly life of humans, have completely misunderstood and corrupted the truth.

This book is also written in the first person, allegedly by Jesus's disciple Peter. It begins with a discussion between Christ and Peter on the day of Jesus's death, after which it narrates what "really" happened at the crucifixion. This is one of the more bizarre descriptions of Christ's death that you will ever read. In the opening dialogue Christ strongly emphasizes the need for proper "knowledge" for salvation and condemns Christians who lack this knowledge, saying that "they are blind and have no leader" (72.12–13). The non-Gnostic leaders of the Christian churches who praise Christ are blaspheming him and are themselves both blind and deaf (73.13–14). This is especially the case, because they "hold on to the name of a dead man" that is, they think that it is the crucified Jesus who matters for salvation. But how wrong they are! "They do not understand" (76.28–35). These "bishops and deacons" are dried up and barren channels who provide no life-giving water.

After Christ's attack on those who value material existence and who think that his death brings salvation comes the narrative of the crucifixion. While Peter and Christ are talking, Peter sees Jesus, down below the hill where they are standing, "apparently" seized by his enemies and crucified. But above the cross he

sees another image of Christ, this one laughing at the entire proceeding. Considerably confused, Peter asks the Christ standing next to him what he is seeing. Christ replies that the one above the cross is the "living Jesus," and the one on the cross "is the substitute," that is, the stand-in for the real Jesus, who cannot be crucified because he is not really a flesh-and-blood human being. The body being crucified is "the abode of demons, the stony vessel in which they live, the man of Elohim" (the name of the Old Testament God). The one above the cross is laughing at the ignorance of those crucifying him, because they are blind and think that they can kill the Christ. But they can't. He is a spirit, beyond suffering.

This, then, is a Gnostic evaluation of the world and Christ's place in it. Christ's death is not what matters. Salvation comes by accepting his true teaching, which denigrates the material world and the human flesh. His flesh did not matter, and neither does the flesh of his followers. This view is presented through an impeccable authority, a firsthand account by Peter himself, or at least by a writing forged in his name.

The Book of Thomas the Contender

An even more direct attack on the flesh is found in another Gnostic writing known as the *Book of Thomas the Contender,* also found at Nag Hammadi.[16] This book too is pseudepigraphal; it is said to be a revelation to Thomas, Jesus's twin brother, but written down by "Matthaias." Scholars typically take this figure to be Matthew, author of the First Gospel.

In this book Christ gives a revelation just before he ascends to heaven. The goal of the revelation is to emphasize the importance of self-knowledge: "Those who have not known themselves have known nothing, but those who have known themselves already have acquired knowledge about the depth of the All" (138.16–18).

Knowing oneself means knowing that the real you is not the "you" of your body. It is the spirit, which is separate from the flesh.

Christ points out that the human body is like that of all the animals, as it comes into being through intercourse. Moreover, it survives by eating other creatures and changing. But anything that changes will eventually dissipate and exist no more. So too with humans: "The vessel of their flesh will pass away" (141.6–7). The one who hopes to have salvation in the flesh is therefore to be pitied: "Woe to you who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish."

Since the body is not to be redeemed, the desires of the body are not to be indulged. One of the overarching points of the book is that fleshly lusts entrap a soul in the body, and anyone who succumbs to the fires of desire will be punished in the fires of the afterlife. So the author exhorts his readers to seek for the salvation that comes by escaping the body: "Watch and pray that you may not remain in the flesh, but that you may leave the bondage of the bitterness of this life.... When you leave the pains and the passions of the body, you will receive rest from the Good One. You will reign with the King, you united with him and he with you, from now on and forever" (145.9–14).

This is not really a revelation to Thomas written down by Matthias, however. It is another Gnostic forgery, produced in order to oppose the teachings of other Christians that fleshly existence matters.

Anti-Gnostic Forgeries

Gnostics were not, of course, the only ones who used forgeries to promote their views. The "orthodox" Christians who opposed them responded in kind by publishing forgeries of their own.

3 Corinthians

We have already seen one forgery that could well have served an anti-Gnostic purpose, *3 Corinthians*. Earlier I talked about *3 Corinthians* being directed against Marcion, who, like the Gnostics, devalued the life of the flesh. It is hard to know exactly whom the pseudonymous author has in mind when he affirms the flesh of Christ and the salvation of the flesh. Possibly he is attacking all groups that held to contrary views. But at least his own view is not hard to discern. His overarching emphasis is that Christ came into this world that he might "save *all flesh* by *his own flesh* and that he might raise us *in the flesh* from the dead as he has presented himself to us as our example."

For this author, Jesus was really born of Mary. This was in fulfillment of what the prophets of the Old Testament had declared. These prophets were spokespersons of the one true God, who had created the world and who was the "almighty," not some kind of lower, inferior divinity. Precisely in "his own body, Jesus Christ saved all flesh," and it will be in the flesh that his followers will experience ultimate salvation at the resurrection. Here, then, in *3 Corinthians,* forgeries of the heretics are countered by a forgery of the orthodox, a letter claiming to be written by Paul, but in fact written by an author living much later.

Epistula Apostolorum

As a second and final example of an orthodox forgery I can mention a second-century book known as the *Epistula Apostolorum,* the "Epistle of the Apostles."[17] This is a letter allegedly written after the resurrection by the twelve apostles, who name themselves and write in the first person, in opposition to the "false apostles" Simon and Cerinthus. Simon we have met before

as the archheretic of the second century, maligned, for example, in the *Acts of Peter* and the *Pseudo-Clementines*. Here he is accompanied by another notorious heretic, Cerinthus. Both are attacked for being filled with "deceit." This charge is thick with irony, of course, in a writing that is forged in order to make its readers believe the apostles were really writing it.

The letter presents a revelation that Jesus gives to the apostles after his resurrection, much as the *Book of Thomas the Contender* and other Gnostic writings give the "secret teachings" of Christ after the resurrection. But here the emphasis is completely anti-Gnostic. Few documents stress as heavily as this one the importance of the flesh. Jesus is said to have had a real crucifixion and a real physical resurrection, as noted by the apostle Andrew, for example, who saw Jesus's footprints on the ground after he had been raised: "A ghost, a demon leaves no print in the ground," he insists (chap. 11). The apostles stress: "We felt him, that he had truly risen in the flesh."

Christ himself says, "I…put on your flesh, in which I was born and died and was buried and rose again" (chap. 19); and he indicates that "the flesh of every one will rise with his soul alive and his spirit" (chap. 24). Anyone who teaches anything different (the authors of the *Book of Thomas the Contender* and the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*!) will suffer eternal punishment, involving real, physical pain (chap. 29).

It is interesting that this book explicitly claims to be written against those who "deliberately say what is not true" (chap. 50). This is a book that deliberately claims to be written by apostles who had been dead for a century.

Conclusion

ONE OF THE MOST fascinating features of early Christianity is that so many different Christian teachers and Christian groups were saying so many contrary things. It is not just that they said different things. They often said just the opposite things. There is only one God. No, there are many gods. The material world is the good creation of a good God. No, it comes from a cosmic disaster in the divine realm. Jesus came in the flesh. No, he was totally removed from the flesh. Eternal life comes through the redemption of the flesh. No, it comes through escaping the flesh. Paul taught these things. No, Paul taught those other things. Paul was the true apostle. No, Paul misunderstood the message of Jesus. Peter and Paul agreed on every theological point. No, they were completely at odds with one another. Peter taught that Christians were not to follow the Jewish law. No, he taught that the Jewish law continued to be in force. And on and on and on, world without end.

Not only did those on every side in all of these debates think that they were right and that their opponents were wrong; they also maintained in all sincerity and honesty that their views were the ones taught by Jesus and his apostles. What is more, they all, apparently, produced books to prove it, books that claimed to be written by apostles and supported their own points of view. What is perhaps most interesting of all, the vast majority of these apostolic books were in fact forged. Christians intent on establishing what was right to believe did so by telling lies, in an attempt to deceive their readers into agreeing that they were the ones who spoke the truth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

False Attributions, Fabrications, and Falsifications: Phenomena Related to Forgery

THROUGHOUT THIS BOOK I HAVE focused on "literary" forgery, a deception in which the author of a literary text claims to be someone else. We all know of other, nonliterary kinds of forgeries as well: forgeries of documents (fake wills, marriage certificates, driver's licenses; other forms of identification), works of art, money, and so on. In all of these cases the forger intends to deceive and mislead people for his or her own purposes.

There are many other ways to deceive people, of course. Sometimes deception comes from hiding the truth, for example, by distorting or not telling the whole truth, as our president did for months during the Monica Lewinsky fiasco; or by removing evidence that can reveal the truth, as when another, earlier president, or one of his lackeys, erased crucial portions of the Watergate tapes. Sometimes deception comes from doctoring the truth, as happened when the American and British people, and possibly their elected officials, were fed misinformation about the threat to the United States posed by Iraq's stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction. Sometimes deception comes when people make excessive claims about themselves or their work, as when James Frey stated that his book *Million Little Pieces* was

autobiographical, when in fact it was fictional, arousing the ire not only of millions of potential readers, but also of the great Oprah herself. And sometimes deception occurs when someone claims as his or her own work the work of another, for example, in instances of plagiarism, which are reaching epidemic proportions on college campuses around the country thanks to that boon and bane of modern human existence, the Internet.

All of these alternate forms of deception were available in antiquity as well, of course (well, apart from the Internet). To round out my study of forgery, I would like to consider some of them in this chapter, restricting myself specifically to literary forms of misinformation. The first is not necessarily a form of deception; it is the other kind of pseudepigraphy that I mentioned at the outset of my discussion. Whereas some pseudepigrapha—writings under a "false name"—are forgeries, others involve "false attributions" in this case someone other than the author claims that an anonymous writing was written by a well-known person, when in fact it was not. Sometimes, to be sure, that can be a form of deception (though not by the author). Other times it is just a well-intentioned mistake.

False Attributions

IT WAS A LOT more common to write a book anonymously in antiquity than it is today. Just within the pages of the New Testament, nine of the books—fully one-third of the writings—were produced by authors who did not reveal their names. When church fathers were deciding which books to include in Scripture, however, it was necessary to "know" who wrote these books, since only writings with clear apostolic connections could be considered authoritative Scripture. So, for example, four early Gospels that were all anonymous began to be circulated under

the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John about a century after they were written. The book of Acts was known to have been written by the author of the Third Gospel, so it too was assigned to Luke. The anonymous book of Hebrews was assigned to Paul, even though numbers of early Christian scholars realized that Paul did not write it, as scholars today agree. And three short anonymous writings with some similarities to the Fourth Gospel were assigned to the same author, and so were called 1, 2, and 3 John. None of these books claims to be written by the author to whom they were ultimately assigned. But since the real authors made no claims for themselves, the books are not forgeries. They are simply false attributions—assuming, for the moment, that the names attached to them are not those of the people who actually wrote them.

Misattributions by Mistake

Often in early Christianity anonymous writings were assigned to certain authors for fairly neutral reasons—readers simply wanted to know who wrote them. Just to give a simple example, in the third and fourth centuries there was a book in circulation called *Against All Heresies*. The book, which we still have today, gives a description of thirty-two individuals or groups who held beliefs that the anonymous author considered false. One of the great heresiologists—that is, heresy hunters—of the early Christian centuries was Tertullian, from the early third century. Some readers of *Against All Heresies* came to think that even though the book was anonymous, it must have been written by him. So scribes who copied the book identified Tertullian as the author, and the book was added to the collection of Tertullian's writings, even though it never claims to be written by him.

Modern scholars are convinced on stylistic grounds that Tertullian did not write the book. Who then did? We do know of a

book with this title written by the church writer Victorinus of Pettau, who was active around the year 270 CE, half a century after Tertullian. Some scholars have thought that this is the book we have.[1] Others have argued that it was written by an unknown author seventy years earlier, in Greek rather than in Tertullian's Latin, so that the book we now have is a translation into Latin of an originally anonymous work. The reality is that we will never know for sure. The readers and scribes in the ancient world who thought that Tertullian wrote it were almost certainly wrong, but there may not have been any ulterior motive in their assigning it to him. They may simply have made a mistake.

Attributions Made to Increase the Authority of a Writing

In other instances the attribution of a writing to an author may have been made in order to add greater weight to its significance. For example, one of the earliest Christian writings from outside the New Testament is a letter sent from the church of Rome to the Christians of Corinth, urging them to reinstate a group of church elders who had been unceremoniously removed from office. Traditionally the book has been known as *1 Clement*. This is a long letter—sixty-five chapters in modern editions—that uses numerous scriptural and rhetorical arguments to make its point, which is that leaders of the church have divine authority and are not to be replaced at the whim or on the vote of a local congregation. Anyone who acts against the leadership of the church is doing so out of profane jealousy. The church of Corinth is to restore its leaders to their rightful place.

Even though the letter claims to be written by the "church" that is in Rome, obviously someone wrote it, not hundreds of people serving on a letter-writing committee. Eventually the

letter came to be attributed to a figure we have met before in our study, Clement of Rome, allegedly the fourth bishop of Rome, who had been appointed to that office by none other than Simon Peter, Jesus's great disciple and apostle of the church. Once the name of Clement was associated with the letter, it obviously took on greater force and persuasive power. This is not simply a lengthy exhortation written by a group of unknown and unnamed individuals. It is a book written by one of the great authorities of the early Christian church. Largely as a result of this attribution, the letter enjoyed great success in the early church. Some Christians thought that it should be included among the writings of the New Testament.[2]

Misattributions of the Gospels

Yet other anonymous writings were, of course, later deemed to be part of the Christian Scriptures. That never happened, however, unless it was known, or at least claimed, that the books had been written with apostolic authority. This is the case of the four New Testament Gospels, all of which were originally anonymous and then later connected with the names of apostles and apostolic companions.

It is always interesting to ask why an author chose to remain anonymous, and this is never more so than with the Gospels of the New Testament. In some instances an ancient author did not need to name himself, because his readers knew perfectly well who he was and did not need to be told. That is almost certainly the case with the letters of 2 and 3 John. These are private letters sent from someone who calls himself "the elder" to a church in another location. It is safe to assume that the recipients of the letters knew who he was.

Some have thought the Gospels were like that—written by leading persons in particular congregations who did not need to

identify themselves, because everyone knew who they were. But then as the books were copied and circulated, names were still not attached to them. As a result the identities of the authors were soon lost. Then later readers, rightly or wrongly, associated the books with two of the disciples (Matthew and John) and with two companions of the apostles (Mark the companion of Peter and Luke the companion of Paul).

Another option is that the authors did not name themselves because they thought their narratives assumed greater authority if told anonymously. If the Gospel stories about Jesus are claimed by a particular author, then in some sense they seem to lose their universal appeal and applicability; they are seen as one person's version of the story, rather than "the" version of the story.

There is one reason in particular for thinking that this is what the Gospel writers had in mind. It involves the way these narratives are written. In all four Gospels, the story of Jesus is presented as a continuation of the history of the people of God as narrated in the Jewish Bible. The portions of the Old Testament that relate the history of Israel after the death of Moses are found in the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. All of these books are written anonymously. These books take the story of God's people from their conquest of the promised land (Joshua) to their ups and downs under charismatic rulers called judges (the book of Judges) and then under a series of kings (1 Samuel–2 Kings). This biblical history includes a promise to the first truly great king, David, that he would always have a descendant on the throne ruling Israel (2 Sam. 7:14). But the history concludes with disaster, when the Babylonian armies wipe out the nation and remove the king from power (end of 2 Kings).

Many Jews expected that in the future God would fulfill his promise to David and bring a new anointed one, a new "messiah," to rule his people Israel. The Gospels are written to

show that in fact this new messiah is none other than Jesus (see Mark 1:1; John 20:30–31). To be sure, Jesus was different from the kind of messiah that other Jews were expecting.[3] Rather than coming as a great king, like David, he came as a prophet speaking of the *future* kingdom of God. He himself would bring this kingdom not by being installed as king in Jerusalem, but by dying on the cross to bring salvation. This was a salvation not from the enemies of Israel, the Romans, but from the ultimate enemies of God, the powers of sin and death. Jesus conquered these alien powers at his death and resurrection, and he is returning soon as king of the earth.

This is the message of the Gospels, and it is portrayed in these books as continuous with the anonymously written history of Israel as laid out in the Old Testament Scriptures. This can be seen, for example, in our earliest Gospel, Mark, which begins by quoting an Old Testament series of prophecies anticipating the coming of the messiah and then introducing Jesus as the one to whom these prophecies pointed. It can be seen in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which portray the birth of Jesus as a fulfillment of the predictions of Scripture, using imagery and language heavily dependent on Old Testament narratives to give their opening stories a "biblical" feel. It can even be seen in the Gospel of John, which begins with a powerful poem about Christ's coming into the world here at the end of time in terms highly reminiscent of the stories of the creation in the book of Genesis (Genesis: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God").

The Gospel authors, each in his own way, seem to be portraying the story of Jesus as a continuation of the story of the people of God, Israel. He is the fulfillment of all that was anticipated by the authors and prophets of the Old Testament. So it makes

sense for these Gospel writers to remain anonymous, as the writers of biblical history were almost always anonymous.

The anonymity of the Gospel writers was respected for decades. When the Gospels of the New Testament are alluded to and quoted by authors of the early second century, they are never entitled, never named. Even Justin Martyr, writing around 150–60 CE, quotes verses from the Gospels, but does not indicate what the Gospels were named. For Justin, these books are simply known, collectively, as the "Memoirs of the Apostles." It was about a century after the Gospels had been originally put in circulation that they were definitively named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This comes, for the first time, in the writings of the church father and heresiologist Irenaeus, around 180–85 CE.

Irenaeus wrote a five-volume work, typically known today as *Against Heresies,* directed against the false teachings rampant among Christians in his day. At one point in these writings he insists that "heretics" (i.e., false teachers) have gone astray either because they use Gospels that are not really Gospels or because they use only one or another of the four that are legitimately Gospels. Some heretical groups used only Matthew, some only Mark, and so on. For Irenaeus, just as the gospel of Christ has been spread by the four winds of heaven over the four corners of the earth, so there must be four and only four Gospels, and they are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[4]

Modern readers may not find this kind of logic very compelling, but it is not difficult to see why orthodox writers like Irenaeus wanted to stress the point. Lots of Gospels were in circulation. Christians who wanted to appeal to the authority of the Gospels had to know which ones were legitimate. For Irenaeus and his fellow orthodox Christians, legitimate Gospels could only be those that had apostolic authority behind them. The authority of a Gospel resided in the person of its author. The author therefore had to be authoritative, either an apostle himself or a close

companion of an apostle who could relate the stories of the Gospel under his authority. In the year 155, when Justin was writing, it may still have been perfectly acceptable to quote the Gospels without attributing them to particular authors. But soon there were so many other Gospels in circulation that the books being widely cited by orthodox Christians needed to be given apostolic credentials. So they began to be known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Why were these names chosen by the end of the second century? For some decades there had been rumors floating around that two important figures of the early church had written accounts of Jesus's teachings and activities. We find these rumors already in the writings of the church father Papias, around 120–30 CE, nearly half a century before Irenaeus. Papias claimed, on the basis of good authority,[5] that the disciple Matthew had written down the sayings of Jesus in the Hebrew language and that others had provided translations of them, presumably into Greek. He also said that Peter's companion Mark had rearranged the preaching of Peter about Jesus into sensible order and created a book out of it.[6]

There is nothing to indicate that when Papias is referring to Matthew and Mark, he is referring to the Gospels that were later called Matthew and Mark. In fact, everything he says about these two books contradicts what we know about (our) Matthew and Mark: Matthew is not a collection of Jesus's sayings, but of his deeds and experiences as well; it was not written in Hebrew, but in Greek; and it was not written—as Papias supposes—independently of Mark, but was based on our Gospel of Mark. As for Mark, there is nothing about our Mark that would make you think it was Peter's version of the story, any more than it is the version of any other character in the account (e.g., John the son of Zebedee). In fact, there is nothing to suggest that Mark was based on the teachings of any one person at all, let alone Peter.

Instead, it derives from the oral traditions about Jesus that "Mark" had heard after they had been in circulation for some decades.

Eventually, though, it came to be seen as necessary to assign authors' names to the four Gospels that were being most widely used in orthodox circles, to differentiate them from the "false" Gospels used by heretics. The process is not hard to detect for the First and Fourth Gospels. Since it was thought that Matthew had written a Gospel (thus Papias), one of the Gospels was called by his name, the one thought to be most Jewish in its orientation, since Matthew was, after all, a Jew. The Fourth Gospel was thought to belong to a mysterious figure referred to in that book as "the Beloved Disciple" (see, e.g., John 20:20–24), who would have to have been one of Jesus's closest followers. The three closest to Jesus, in our early traditions, were Peter, James, and John. Peter was already explicitly named in the Fourth Gospel, and so he could not be the Beloved Disciple; James was known to have been martyred early in the history of the church and so would not have been the author. That left John, the son of Zebedee. So he was assigned the authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

Some scholars have argued that it would not make sense to assign the Second and Third Gospels to Mark and Luke unless the books were actually written by people named Mark and Luke, since they were not earthly disciples of Jesus and were rather obscure figures in the early church. I've never found these arguments very persuasive. For one thing, just because figures may seem relatively obscure to us today doesn't mean that they were obscure in Christian circles in the early centuries. Moreover, it should never be forgotten that there are lots and lots of books assigned to people about whom we know very little, to Philip, for example, Thomas, and Nicodemus. Furthermore, Mark was far from obscure; he was at one time Paul's companion and was

thought to be Peter's right-hand man, so that what he wrote could be trusted to be Peter's version of the Gospel. This connection is made not only in Papias, but eventually in the writings of Tertullian, who states explicitly: "That which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was."[7]

With respect to the Third Gospel, it should be remembered that its author also wrote the book of Acts, and there he implicitly claims to have been a companion of Paul's. Because Acts stresses that Christianity succeeded principally among Gentiles, the author himself may have been a Gentile. Since there was thought to be a Gentile named Luke among Paul's companions, he was assigned the Third Gospel.

The authority of the Gospels was then secure: two of them were allegedly written by eyewitnesses to the events they narrate (Matthew and John), and the other two other were written from the perspectives of the two greatest apostles, Peter (the Gospel of Mark) and Paul (the Gospel of Luke). It does not appear, however, that any of these books was written by an eyewitness to the life of Jesus or by companions of his two great apostles.[8] For my purposes here it is enough to reemphasize that the books do not claim to be written by these people and early on they were not assumed to be written by these people. The authors of these books never speak in the first person (the First Gospel never says, "One day, Jesus and I went to Jerusalem…"). They never claim to be personally connected with any of the events they narrate or the persons about whom they tell their stories. The books are thoroughly, ineluctably, and invariably anonymous. At the same time, later Christians had very good reasons to assign the books to people who had not written them.

As a result, the authors of these books are not themselves making false authorial claims. Later readers are making these claims about them. They are therefore not forgeries, but false attributions.

Other False Attributions

Very much the same can be said about the remaining anonymous books of the New Testament. Scholars are highly unified in thinking that Paul did not write the book of Hebrews, even though it was included in the canon of the New Testament by church fathers who thought that it was.[9] The letters 1, 2, and 3 John sound in many ways like the Gospel of John, but they are strikingly different as well, especially in the historical context they presuppose. They were probably not written by the same author, who was not John the son of Zebedee in any event, but by a later Christian living in the same community, which had begun to experience a different range of problems from those presupposed in the Fourth Gospel. Later Christian writers who accepted the books as sacred authorities needed to assign them to an apostle, however, and so it made sense to claim that they, like the Fourth Gospel, had been written by John the son of Zebedee.

Assigning anonymous books to known authorities did not stop with the writings of the New Testament. Just to give one additional example, I might mention one of the most interesting books not to make it into the canon of Scripture. For centuries there were Christians who thought the book should be included. I think we can all be glad that it was not. This book provides one of the most vitriolic attacks on Jews and Judaism from early Christianity. Had it been included in Scripture, Jewish-Christian relations may well have turned out even worse, if that can be imagined, than they did. This book was originally written anonymously, but it later came to be attributed to one of Paul's closest companions and co-workers and so is known as the *Epistle of Barnabas*.[10]

This book is somewhat like a letter in that its author addresses a group of readers, but it is really more like an extended essay. The point of the book is to show the superiority of

Christianity to the Jewish religion. The author makes this point by maligning Judaism as a religion that is and always has been false, all the way back to the time of Moses himself. That is because, according to this author, the ancient Israelites broke the covenant that God made with them at the very beginning, when Moses was given the Ten Commandments. When Moses descended from Mount Sinai with commandments in hand, he saw that the people had already committed idolatry. In anger he threw the two tablets of the law down, smashing them into bits. According to the author of *Barnabas,* this represented the breaking of the covenant (4.7–8; 14.1–4). And God never did renew the covenant with the Jews. They were lost from that day on.

The Jews, of course, were given more laws by Moses, including a new set of the Ten Commandments. But since they had alienated themselves from God, they never understood these laws and made the fatal mistake of assuming that God meant them to be taken literally instead of figuratively. As a result the Jews had always misinterpreted their own laws. When God orders the Jews not to eat swine, for example, he does not literally mean for them to avoid pork. He means that people should not behave like swine, grunting loudly when hungry, but being silent when full. People should turn to God with their prayers not only when they are in need, but also when things are good (10.1–3).

So too when God commands that the day of the Sabbath be observed, he does not mean that everyone should be lazy one day of the week. The seventh "day" needs to be understood symbolically, bearing in mind that "with the Lord a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day." The Sabbath commandment means that the Sabbath day, the millennium, should be looked forward to and anticipated by God's people. The creation will last for six days—six thousand years—after which there will be a thousand-year period on earth in which God and his people will rule supreme. Jews misunderstood this message and

foolishly assumed that God meant for them not to work on Saturdays (15.1–9).

Barnabas goes through a number of the laws of the Old Testament to show that God never intended them to be followed literally, but to be understood figuratively. Since Jews never understood the point, they never were the true people of God. It is the followers of Jesus who have the true interpretation of Scripture. As a result, Jews are not God's people; Christians are. And the Old Testament is not a Jewish book, but a Christian one.

This "letter" was originally published anonymously, possibly because the first readers knew full well who had written it. It could not have been written by one of Paul's closest co-workers and companions, Barnabas, because it did not appear until many years after his death—it is usually dated to 130–35 CE. But why was it eventually attributed to him? No one knows for sure, but I think a good case can be made that some readers of the book wanted to make a particular point by the attribution, a point related to the arguments going on in Christianity in the second century, some fifty years or so after the book was written.

In the later second century one of the biggest threats facing "orthodox" Christianity was the worldwide church established by Marcion and his followers. If you'll remember, Marcion had claimed Paul's authority for his view that there were two Gods, the inferior wrathful God of the Old Testament and the superior loving God of Jesus. Paul was thought to be the true representative of Jesus's message, the one who understood that salvation comes apart from the Jewish law. Marcion took Paul's differentiation between the gospel of Christ and the law of the Jews to an extreme, so that there was in fact no connection between them. Christ represented a different God. The Old Testament God, the God of the Jews, the creation, and the law, was to be escaped by Christians, not worshiped by them.

Marcion therefore rejected the Old Testament entirely, claiming that it had nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus. The *Epistle of Barnabas* takes a different perspective. In fact, one could argue that it takes precisely the opposite perspective. Here, rather than having nothing to do with Christianity and the message of Jesus, the Old Testament has everything to do with them. It is the Christian book par excellence, because it proclaims the gospel of Christ—figuratively.

Why then assign the book to Paul's closest companion? Because by doing so the book becomes the perspective of the real Paul, as opposed to the Paul of Marcion, who allegedly had nothing to do with the Old Testament and its laws. Now Paul, by association through Barnabas, proclaims the true message. The Old Testament in fact is Scripture. It is truth from God. It is a proclamation of the gospel of Christ. It is a fully Christian book.

By assigning this popular tractate to Barnabas, then, opponents of Marcion were able to claim Paul for their view and to show that the apostle stood for an understanding of Christianity that was very much at odds with the views set forth by the chief heretic of the second century, who had claimed Paul as his own.

Fabrications

AS I'VE INDICATED, A false attribution is not necessarily a deception; it may simply have been a mistake or someone's "best guess" about the author of an anonymous work. My hunch is that most writers who claimed that a particular, famous person was the author of this or that writing probably believed it was true, whether or not they knew it to be true. The same thing decidedly cannot be said about forgers. Whoever wrote 1 Timothy knew full well that he wasn't really the apostle Paul. He made that part up.

Other kinds of literature are "made up" as well. As with false attributions, however, it is not always clear that the person who writes this literature knows that it is made up. He may think that what he says is accurate. When this involves historical narratives, he may think that what he says is historically factual, even if his account is in fact legendary. But at some point, someone ultimately, always, comes up with a legendary account. Of course it is always possible that even in such cases the author who comes up with the story may think it really happened. And sometimes stories just seem to appear out of nowhere. But in many cases, surely the person who makes up the story knows what he is doing.

We have seen a number of made-up stories already in books that were forged. Whoever forged the *Gospel of Peter* wrote the account of Jesus emerging from the tomb so tall that his head reached above the skies, with a walking, talking cross emerging behind him. This is not a historical narrative; it is fiction. I would call it a "fabrication," that is, a "made-up story that tries to pass itself off as historical."

In many instances, fabrications are disseminated by anonymous authors who are not forgers. This was the case, for example, with the accounts found in the *Acts of Peter,* which tells stories of Peter's miracle-working contests with Simon the Magician, in which he performs such astounding feats as raising a smoked tuna from the dead. These "historical" narratives are in fact fabrications. Whoever first came up with them—whether the author of the text or someone who told the story orally before the author heard it—was telling something that he possibly (likely? probably?) knew was not historically accurate. So too with the *Acts of Paul* (or the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*), where Paul is said to have preached a distinctive gospel of salvation that said a person is made right with God not through Jesus's death and resurrection, but by living a chaste life, avoiding all sexual activity.

As with ancient myths (as mentioned in Chapter 2), it is often difficult to know whether readers of such stories took them as historical accounts, or simply as entertaining narratives, or as something else. But in many instances it is clear that some readers understood such stories to be "false" tales, since they were so vociferously opposed in some circles. One need think only of Serapion's reaction to the *Gospel of Peter* (see Chapter 2) or Tertullian's harsh words about the *Acts of Paul* (Chapter 3). In both cases the contents of the story were seen as objectionable and the account was charged with having been falsely fabricated in order to promote false understandings of the faith.

This shows that for some ancient readers, at least, such historical fabrications were not thought of simply as innocuous fictions, but either as false tales, in that they did not convey the "truth," or as false histories, in that that they narrated events that did not actually happen. In either case, in the views of their opponents they were harmful fabrications. Whether harmful or not, numerous fabrications circulated in the early church about Jesus and those connected with him: his family, his disciples, and his other acquaintances. We have scores of such stories from the first four centuries of the church.

THE PROTO-GOSPEL OF JAMES

One of the most historically influential set of such tales comes in a book called the *Proto-Gospel of James*.[11] The *Proto-Gospel* was enormously popular among Christians throughout the Middle Ages—even more popular than many books of the Bible. It had a significant impact on the Christian imagination and on Christian art.[12] Readers have called it a proto-Gospel, because it mainly narrates events that transpired prior to the accounts of Jesus's birth and life found in the New Testament Gospels. The book largely concerns Jesus's mother, Mary, her birth and early

life, her conception and giving birth to Jesus. I have said it is forged, because it falsely claims to have been written by Jesus's half brother James, who in this account is the son of Joseph from a previous marriage. There are debates about when the book was first written, but since it appears to know the Gospels of Matthew and Luke from the end of the first century and appears to be referred to by the theologian Origen at the beginning of the third century, it is often dated sometime in the mid to late second century.

One of the chief questions driving this narrative concerns Mary's suitability for her role as the mother of the Son of God. Surely Jesus's mother was no ordinary person! And in this story, Mary is anything but ordinary. Her own birth is miraculous. Her mother, Anna, is barren, but miraculously conceives as a result of her prayers and the prayers of her husband, the wealthy aristocratic Jew Joiachim. As a young child Mary is inordinately special. Devoted to God from birth, she is taken by her parents to the holy Jewish Temple as a three-year-old and is raised there by the priests, who do not need even to feed her, since she receives her daily food from the hand of an angel.

When she is about to reach puberty, Mary can no longer remain in the Temple, presumably because menstruation was thought to bring ritual impurity. So the priests gather to decide how to find her a husband. Instructed by God, they have all the unmarried men of Israel come together, each of them bringing a wooden rod. The high priest gathers all the rods and takes them into the sanctuary. The next day he redistributes them to each man, and a great sign appears. A dove emerges from Joseph's rod, flies around, and lands on Joseph's head. He is thus the one chosen to take the young Mary as wife.

But Joseph is highly reluctant, since he is an old man who already has grown sons, and surely he will become a laughingstock among his fellow Israelites if he marries such a young girl.

The high priest convinces Joseph that he has no choice, and so he takes Mary in marriage.

The stories about Mary and Joseph continue, often amplifying the accounts found in the New Testament Gospels of Matthew and Luke (the only two New Testament Gospels that speak about the birth of Jesus), sometimes giving completely new stories. None is as odd or memorable as the account of what happens immediately after Mary gives birth to Jesus outside of Bethlehem. Joseph is said to have gone off to find a midwife who can assist at the birth. He finds one, but they arrive too late. Coming to the cave where Mary had been left, they see a bright light and then an infant appearing out of nowhere. The midwife is immediately convinced that this has been a miraculous birth and runs off to find a companion, Salome, who refuses to believe that a virgin has given birth. She comes to the cave and decides to give Mary a postpartum inspection to see if her hymen has remained intact. It has indeed, to no surprise to readers. But Salome's hand begins to burn as if it has caught fire. This is her punishment for refusing to believe in the power of God at the birth of Jesus. When she prays to God and asks for forgiveness, she is told to pick up the child. When she does so, her hand is healed.

Numerous other tales of the miraculous are found in the account, all of them, of course, originating in the pious imaginations of later storytellers or the author of the account rather than in historical events. These are not accurate accounts of events that actually transpired, but later stories put in the guise of historical narrative. Were they read as historical accounts or simply as entertaining narratives? A case can be made that they were read both ways. Some Christians based serious theological claims on them, such as the doctrine of the "perpetual virginity of Mary," that is, the view that Mary remained a virgin even after giving birth to Jesus. Such Christians certainly thought these

accounts were "true," and surely many (most?) of them believed the events that they narrate really happened.

The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew

The same can be said of the stories found in the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*. It is called this because it was thought in the Middle Ages to have been written by Matthew himself. Originally, however, the book was a heavily reworked version of the *Proto-Gospel*. It too claimed to have been written by Jesus's half brother James.[13]

Among the more interesting accounts of this narrative are the miracles Jesus performs when the Holy Family flees to Egypt after his birth. We learn, for example, that en route they stop to rest outside a cave. To the terror of Joseph and Mary, out of the cave come a troop of dragons. The two-year-old Jesus, however, is not the least bit afraid. He waddles and stands before the fearsome beasts. When they see who he is, they bow down in worship before him. The author tells us that this fulfilled the predictions of Scripture: "Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet in the Psalms, who said, 'Praise the Lord from the earth, O dragons and all the places of the abyss,'" a reference to the Greek version of Psalm 148:7.

Later on their journey, the family stops to rest under a palm tree, and Jesus's mother, Mary, looks wistfully at the fruit in the high, upper branches, wishing there were a way to get some to eat. Joseph upbraids her, since there is obviously no way to climb the tree. But the young Jesus intervenes and orders the tree to bend down to give its precious fruit to his mother. And it does so. Mary eats to her heart's content, and Jesus blesses the tree for its obedience, telling it that as a reward one of its branches will be carried to heaven and planted in paradise. Straightaway an angel

descends and removes a branch to take it to its new heavenly home.

Once the family arrives in Egypt they have no place to stay, and so they go for shelter into a pagan temple. Inside this temple are 365 idols representing the gods who are to be worshiped, one for each day of the year. But when Jesus enters, the idols all fall over on their faces in obeisance to the true divinity in their midst. Once the local ruler learns what has happened, he comes himself and worships the child, telling all his friends and his entire army that now the Lord of all the gods has come into their midst.

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

At roughly the time the *Proto-Gospel of James* was starting to circulate, another fabricated account of Jesus appeared, today known as the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*.[14] Driving this narrative is a question that has been asked by numerous Christian throughout the ages: If Jesus was the miracle-working Son of God as an adult, what was he like as a child? The *Infancy Gospel* contains stories about Jesus between the ages of five and twelve.

The account begins with Jesus as a five-year-old playing by a stream near his home in Nazareth. The young Jesus gathers some of the water of the stream into a pool and orders it to become pure. And it does so, by his word alone. Jesus then stoops down and forms twelve birds out of the mud. A Jewish man who is walking by becomes upset, because it is the Sabbath and Jesus has violated the law by "working." The man heads off to tell Joseph what his son has done, and Joseph rushes to the stream to upbraid the boy for breaking the Sabbath. In response, Jesus claps his hands and cries out to the birds to come to life and fly away, and they do so. Here Jesus is shown to be above the law and to be the lord of life. Beyond that, he has gotten off the hook

with his father by destroying, in effect, any incriminating evidence. Mud birds? What birds?

Another child who is playing beside Jesus takes a branch and scatters the water he has carefully gathered together. This angers the young Jesus, who tells the boy, "You unrighteous, irreverent idiot! What did the pools of water do to harm you? See, now you also will be withered like a tree, and you will never bear leaves or root or fruit." The child immediately withers on the spot.

In the next story Jesus is said to be walking through his village when another child runs up to him and accidentally bumps him on the shoulder. Jesus is irritated and says to the boy, "You'll go no farther on *your* way." And the child falls down dead. The parents of the boy carry him off with some harsh words for Joseph: "Since you have such a child, you cannot live with us in the village. Or teach him to bless and not to curse—for he is killing our children!"

Eventually Joseph decides that Jesus needs to receive an education, and on three occasions he sends him off to teachers who try to instruct him, but to no effect. In one instance the teacher tries to teach Jesus the alphabet, in Greek, and practices reciting with him. But Jesus will not respond, until finally he says to the teacher, "If you are really a teacher and know the letters well, tell me the power of the Alpha [i.e., the first letter of the alphabet], and I will tell you the power of the Beta [the second letter]." The teacher gets angry and smacks Jesus upside the head. Big mistake. Jesus curses him, and he dies on the spot. Joseph takes Jesus back home with instructions to Mary: "Do not let him out the door; for those who anger him die."

Eventually, however, Jesus starts using his power not to harm, but to help: raising children from the dead, curing his brother James of a deadly snakebite, and proving to be remarkably handy with his miraculous skills around his father's carpenter shop. The account ends with Jesus as a twelve-year-old in

the Temple in Jerusalem, showing his intelligence and spiritual superiority in his discussions with the teachers of the law, a story otherwise known from the Gospel of Luke.

It is hard to know what to make of these stories of Jesus the wunderkind.[15] Some modern readers have thought that they portray Jesus in a very negative light indeed. But it is not clear that early Christian readers would have seen them that way. The stories may have been designed simply as good Christian entertainment. Or they may have been serious attempts to show how the miracle-working Son of God was active and filled with divine power even in the early years, long before his public ministry.

Fabrications Within the Canon

It should not be thought that Christians started fabricating stories about Jesus only after the New Testament was completed. In fact, there can be little doubt that some accounts were manufactured in the early years of the Christian movement. Some of these fabrications made their way into the New Testament.

We could go to great lengths to talk about New Testament narratives that purport to present historical events, but are in fact invented stories. Such narratives can be found among the stories about Jesus's birth, life, teachings, death, and resurrection as well as in stories about his followers, such as Peter and Paul, after his death in the book of Acts.

With regard to the stories of Jesus's birth, one does not need to wait for the later Gospels, mentioned above, to begin seeing the fabricated accounts; they are already there in the familiar versions of Matthew and Luke. There never was a census under Caesar Augustus that compelled Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem just before Jesus was born; there never was a star that mysteriously guided wise men from the East to Jesus; Herod the Great never did slaughter all the baby boys in Bethlehem; Jesus

and his family never did spend several years in Egypt. These may sound like bold and provocative statements, but scholars have known the reasons and evidence behind them for many years. Since I devote considerable attention to them—and to other fabricated accounts of the Gospels—in another recent book, however, I will not go into the details here.[16]

It is almost impossible to say whether the people who made up and passed along these stories were comparable to forgers, who knew full well that they were engaged in a kind of deception, or whether they, instead, were like those who falsely attributed anonymous books to known authors without knowing they were wrong. My guess is that most of the people who told these stories genuinely believed they happened. Even so, we should not say that these storytellers were not involved in deception. They may not have meant to deceive others (or they may have!), but they certainly did deceive others spectacularly well. For many, many centuries it was simply assumed that the narratives about Jesus and the apostles—narratives both within and outside the New Testament—described events that actually happened. Most readers still read the canonical accounts that way. But many of these stories are not historical narratives. They are, instead, fabricated accounts, whether made up intentionally in order to prove a point or simply brought into being, somehow, when Christians passed along "information" about Jesus and those connected to him.

Falsifications

IN ADDITION TO FORGERY, false attribution, and fabrication, there is another kind of deceptive literary activity that can be called "falsification." This occurs whenever someone copies an author's text by hand, but alters it in some way, omitting

something, adding something, or just changing the wording. If someone were to copy Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and add a few extra verses that he thought up himself, then the next person to read that manuscript would naturally assume that Paul himself had written the inserted words. That is very similar to what happens with forgery: someone writes his own words, but attributes them to someone else. In this case, however, rather than composing an entire document in someone else's name, a copyist has written a portion of a document and included it in the other person's book.

The practice of altering texts in the process of copying them happened all the time in antiquity.[17] In a world without electronic means of publication, photocopy machines, or even carbon paper, it was well-nigh impossible to ensure that any copy of a text would be 100 percent accurate, without changes of any kind. This is true for all books copied in the ancient world. That is why, when great kings wanted to start significant libraries in their cities, they were sometimes willing to pay sizable amounts of money for "originals" of the great classics. You could never be sure if copies would be completely true to the original.

All of the early Christian writings were, necessarily, susceptible to the vicissitudes of copying. We don't have any original copies of any books of the New Testament or of any other early Christian book. What we have are copies that have been made from copies of the copies of the copies. In most instances our earliest complete copies are from centuries after the originals.

Just about every copyist made mistakes in copying. As a result, if you were to copy a copy of an original, in most instances you would copy not just the words of the original, but also the mistakes your predecessor made in copying the original. And whoever came after you and copied your copy would reproduce both your mistakes and the mistakes of your predecessor as well as introduce some mistakes of her own. And so it goes, year after

year, century after century. The only time mistakes are removed is when a copyist realizes that a predecessor had copied something incorrectly and then tries to correct the mistake. The problem is that there is no way to know whether the copyist corrects the mistake correctly or not. He may also correct it incorrectly, that is, change it to something that is different from both the copy he is copying and from the original that was first copied. The possibilities are endless.

We do not need to speculate that Christian scribes altered the texts they copied. You can take any book of early Christianity and compare the surviving copies, whether it is a book from the New Testament, say, one of the Gospels or Paul's letters, or a book from outside the New Testament, say, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* or the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The copies will all differ, often in lots of minor insignificant ways and sometimes in big ways.

In the vast majority of the cases, the changes that copyists made were simply an accident: the slip of a pen, the misspelling of a word, the accidental omission of a word or a line. Sometimes, though, scribes changed their texts because they wanted to do so, either because they thought their scribal predecessors made a mistake that needed to be corrected or because they wanted to add something to the text (or take away something or change something). As I've indicated, this kind of falsification is close to forgery; it is one author passing off his own words as the words of a respected authority.

I have talked about these kinds of changes in a couple of my earlier books and don't want to belabor the point here. Instead, I simply give a few examples of the kind of thing I mean from the pages of the New Testament. In Chapter 5 I talked about the famous story found in later manuscripts of the Gospel of John about the woman who was caught in the act of adultery and brought to Jesus for judgment. This is the account in which Jesus delivers one of his most famous sayings: "Let the one without sin among

you be the first to cast a stone at her." The story, however, is not found in the oldest manuscripts of the Gospel of John. Moreover, the writing style (in the Greek) is significantly different from the writing style of the rest of the Gospel. In addition, the story breaks the flow of the narrative of John 7–8, where it is found. In other words, if you take the story out of John, the context makes much better sense, as the story immediately before the account flows better directly into the story immediately after it. For these and numerous other reasons there is virtually no debate among New Testament scholars that this story, as wonderful, powerful, and influential as it is, was not originally part of the New Testament. It was added by a scribe.

In this instance we are dealing with both a falsification of the text (making it say something different from what it originally said) and a fabrication (since it is a story that has been made up). There are many other instances of this kind of thing in the surviving manuscripts of the New Testament. Another famous example occurs at the end of the Gospel of Mark. It is sometimes said by people who have not read the concluding chapter of Mark's Gospel closely enough that it "lacks a resurrection narrative." Strictly speaking, that is not true. In Mark's Gospel Jesus is certainly raised from the dead. The women go to the tomb three days after he was buried in order to give his body a proper burial, but the body is not there. Instead, there is a man in the tomb who informs them that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Mark, therefore, believes that Jesus was physically raised from the dead, and he tells his readers as much. But what is most astonishing is what happens next.

The man at the tomb instructs the women to go to the disciples and tell them that Jesus will go before them to Galilee and that they are to meet him there. But instead of telling the disciples, "the women fled from the tomb…and they did not say anything to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8). And that's where

the Gospel ends. There is definitely a resurrection of Jesus here. But the disciples never learn of it, and there is no account of Jesus's meeting with any of them.

This ending is brilliant. It brings readers up short and makes them say, "*What???* How could the women not tell anyone? How could no one learn of Jesus's resurrection? How could Jesus not appear to anyone afterwards? That's *it*? That's the end? How could that be the end?"

Scribes felt the same way. And, different scribes added different endings to the Gospel. The ending that became the most popular throughout the Middle Ages was found in the manuscripts used by the translators of the King James Version in 1611, so that it became widely familiar to English Bible readers. In an additional twelve verses the women (or at least Mary Magdalene) do go tell the disciples, who do then see Jesus and become convinced he has been raised. It is in these verses that we find the famous words of Jesus that those who believe in him will be able to speak in foreign tongues, pick up serpents, and drink poison without suffering any harm.

But Jesus never said these words, and Mark never claimed he did. They were added to Mark by a later scribe and then recopied over the years.[18] This is a fabricated story that has been put into the Bible by a copyist who falsified the text.

There are hundreds of significant changes in the manuscripts of the New Testament, but let me here just mention one other. In the previous examples one could argue that the falsifications were not exactly the same as forgeries, since both John from the first example and Mark from the second were written anonymously. Technically speaking, the scribes who changed the texts were not saying their words came from the pen of a known authority figure. I would dispute that claim, I think, because by the time scribes made these changes, it was widely thought that the Fourth Gospel was in fact by John and the Second by Mark. But

there is no ambiguity about my final example, since it involves one of the undisputed letters of Paul.

One of the most hurtful passages for the cause of women who want to be active in the Christian church occurs in 1 Corinthians 14:34–35. Here Paul is recorded as saying:

> Let the women in the churches keep silent. For it is not permitted for them to speak; instead let them be submissive, just as the law itself says. If they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

Women are to be silent and submissive to their husbands. They are not to speak at all in church. This obviously makes it impossible for a woman to utter a prophecy in church, pray publicly and openly in church, or teach in church. Women are not allowed even to ask a question in church.

These verses are very much like what one reads in one of the Pauline letters that is *not* authentic, 1 Timothy, which, as we saw in Chapter 3, also indicates that women are to be subject to men and not to exercise any authority over them (2:11–15). But just as 1 Timothy is forged, so too has this passage in 1 Corinthians been falsified. These verses in chapter 14 were not written by Paul. Someone added them to the passage later, after the letter had been placed in circulation.

Scholars have adduced many reasons for this view. For one thing, the verses seem to intrude in the passage in which they are found. Immediately before these verses Paul is talking about prophecy in the church; immediately afterwards he is talking about prophecy. But this passage on women interrupts the flow of the argument. Take them out, and it flows much better.

Even more, it is hard to believe that Paul would tell women that they could not speak in church here in 1 Corinthians 14, when just three chapters earlier he indicated that they could

indeed do so. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul urges women who pray and prophesy in church to do so only with veils on their heads. If they were allowed to speak in chapter 11, how could they be told not to speak in chapter 14? It makes better sense that those scholars are right who think that the verses were not originally part of the text of 1 Corinthians. Someone has falsified the book by adding the verses to it, making the passage say what these copyists wanted it to say rather than allowing Paul to say what he meant to say.[19]

Plagiarism

PLAGIARISM INVOLVES TAKING SOMEONE else's writing and passing it off as your own. As I indicated at the outset of this chapter, it has become an increasingly serious problem on college campuses. Techniques of plagiarism have improved through the use of the Internet, and it is oh so easy to find lots of things written about lots of topics—if not complete essays of approximately the same length as your required term paper, at least chunks of writing that are easily copied into a paper at a critical point. Luckily, methods of detection of plagiarism have improved with advances in technology, as many professors now use sophisticated software designed to identify it. The penalties for being caught can be harsh. At my university, anyone detected and convicted of plagiarism is dismissed from school. Not for a day or two, but permanently.

It is sometimes claimed by scholars that plagiarism is a modern phenomenon without ancient corollary. Some years ago, for example, there appeared an influential and popular book called *The Five Gospels,* put out by a team of scholars from the Jesus Seminar. This book represented the results of the labor of many years, in which scholars worked to decide which of the sayings in

the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Thomas actually go back to the historical Jesus. Sayings that Jesus really said, in the opinion of these scholars, were printed in red; sayings that were relatively close to something he said were printed in pink; sayings that were not really like something he said were in gray; sayings that he absolutely did not say were in black.

Most of the sayings in the Gospels were in gray and black. This incensed a lot of people. A number of scholars who were not involved in the project, however, were more concerned by *which* sayings were in black. In my opinion, the members of the Jesus Seminar typically got precisely wrong what Jesus actually said.

Apart from that, the volume contains at least one statement that scholars would call a "howler," a mistake so outrageous that the scholars who produced it should have known better. This is in the Introduction to the book, where it states: "The concept of plagiarism was unknown in the ancient world."[20]

I don't know how anyone who has actually gone to the trouble of reading the ancient sources could say such a thing. It is flat-out wrong. Ancient authors knew all about plagiarism, and they condemned it as a deceptive practice. For starters, consider the words of Vitruvius, a famous Roman architect and engineer of the first century BCE, in book 7 of his ten-volume work on architecture: "We are…bound to censure those, who, borrowing from others, publish as their own that of which they are not the authors."[21] Or take the comments of Polybius, one of the great historians of the ancient Greek world, writing a hundred years earlier, who reports that historians near his own time who have stolen the writings of ancient historians and passed them off as their own have behaved in a "most shameful" manner. Those who do so engage in "a most disgraceful proceeding."[22]

Some authors were incensed when their own works were plagiarized. On several occasions the witty Roman poet Martial upbraided others for stealing his writings and copying them out

under their own name, as if they had composed them: "You mistake, you greedy thief of my works, who think you can become a poet at no more than the cost of a transcript and a cheap papyrus roll. Applause is not acquired for six or ten sesterces."[23]

In a number of places the historian of philosophy Diogenes Laertius speaks of philosophers and literary authors who tried to pass off the works of others as their own, "stealing" them and publishing them as if they themselves had written them. This was true, he indicates, of a disciple of Socrates named Aeschines, who took several of Socrates's dialogues from his widow and claimed that they were his own compositions. It was also true of Heraclides, whom we met in Chapter 1, who "stole" an essay from another scholar about the ancient Homer and Hesiod and published it as his own. And it was true of the philosopher Empedocles, who was excluded from attending the lectures of the famous sixth-century BCE Pythagoras, because he was "convicted at that time of stealing his discourses."[24]

Like forgery, plagiarism is deceptive, because it intends to lead readers astray. But in another sense plagiarism can be seen as the flip side of forgery. Forgers write their own words and claim they are the words of another; plagiarists take the words of another and claim they are their own.

It is an interesting question whether ancient scholars would have accused some of the early Christian writers of plagiarism. The issues tend to be complicated by the fact that possible instances of plagiarism involve borrowed texts that are anonymous; moreover, the plagiarists themselves often do not actually identify themselves by name, but are either anonymous or claim to be someone else. Can a forger plagiarize? Maybe so.

If so, what are we to say of the book of 2 Peter? Scholars have long recognized that chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3 sound very much like the book of Jude, in its vitriolic attack on false and highly immoral persons who have infiltrated the

Christian church. Very close similarities exist between Jude 4–13, 16–18 and 2 Peter 2:1–18; 3:1–3. There are not many extensive exact verbal repetitions, but they share many of the same ideas, thoughts, and often words. If a modern student simply rewrote a text by changing many of the words but keeping all the ideas, without acknowledging her source, she could well be considered to have plagiarized. But perhaps the issue is not so clear-cut in this case.

What, then, about the Gospels? Scholars since the nineteenth century have argued that the reason Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so much alike—telling many of the same stories, usually in the same sequence, often in precisely the same words—is that they used the same sources. In fact, it is everywhere recognized today that one of them was a source for the other two. Almost all scholars think that Mark was used by Matthew and Luke. Some scholars continue to hold to the view that Matthew was the source for Mark and Luke, but that is very much a minority position. In either case, we have one document that is taken over by others, frequently verbatim. It is true that none of the authors names himself. To that extent the later authors are not, strictly speaking, plagiarizing, in that they are not publishing someone else's work under their own name. But they are taking over someone else's work and publishing it as their own. Ancient scholars who spoke about this phenomenon would have called this "stealing." In modern parlance it is perhaps best to call it a kind of plagiarism.

There are other instances of the phenomenon from outside the New Testament. I mentioned earlier in this chapter, for example, that the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* takes over the narrative of the *Proto-Gospel of James,* publishing it in an edited form (sometimes heavily edited, but in other places hardly edited at all), without acknowledging where the story came from. This is comparable in many ways to what the authors of the New

Testament Gospels of Matthew and Luke did with Mark. Another book I mentioned in Chapter 1, the *Apostolic Constitutions,* is even more flagrant, taking over virtually wholesale three documents from earlier times, the *Didache,* from around the year 100, the *Apostolic Tradition,* from the late second century, and the *Didascalia,* from the third, combining them together into one large document, and publishing it as if it had been information handed down directly from the apostles. But it was not; it was taken over—stolen, to use the ancient parlance—from earlier writings of the Christian tradition.

Conclusion

WHAT CAN WE SAY in conclusion about the forms of deception we have considered in this chapter? False attributions, fabrications, falsifications, plagiarism—they all, indeed, involve deceptive practices. Readers who read books that had been wrongly ascribed to apostles or their companions, or that contained stories that were made up, or that presented texts that had been altered by scribes, or that contained passages or entire accounts that were "stolen" from the writings of earlier authors without acknowledgment—readers of all such materials were deceived in one way or another. Some were deceived into thinking that what they read was really composed by the people claimed as their authors; others were misled to think that the historical events that were narrated were actual historical occurrences. In every case they were wrong. They had been deceived. Just as people continue to be deceived, when they think, for example, that the tax collector Matthew wrote the First Gospel, that Paul told women that they had to be silent in church, or that the author of 2 Peter came up with the ideas and phrases found in his second chapter himself.

One key aspect of forgery, however, does not appear to be involved in every instance of these other forms of deception. Forgery almost always involves a flat-out lie. Forgers claim to be someone else, knowing full well their own real identity. That is not always the case with the comparable phenomena I have been discussing here. Sometimes anonymous works were simply attributed to people who were thought to have written them, and it was all a mistake. Sometimes, possibly, stories were innocently fabricated, just as historically inaccurate stories are made up all the time, without any intention to deceive. Sometimes scribes altered the texts they were copying by accident without meaning to do so.

But other instances probably involved a good deal of intentionality. A theologian who wanted to convince his opponents that his views were those of the apostles may well have claimed that the Fourth Gospel was written by John, without knowing if that was true or not. A storyteller who made up an account about Jesus in order to prove a point may well have known that he was passing off a fiction as a historical event. A scribe who wanted a text to say something other than what it did may well have changed the text for just that reason. In some cases it is hard to imagine how else the resultant deception could have come about. Whoever added the final twelve verses of Mark did not do so by a mere slip of the pen.

In sum, there were numerous ways to lie in and through literature in antiquity, and some Christians took advantage of the full panoply in their efforts to promote their view of the faith. It may seem odd to modern readers, or even counterintuitive, that a religion that built its reputation on possessing the truth had members who attempted to disseminate their understanding of the truth through deceptive means. But it is precisely what happened. The use of deception to promote the truth may well be

considered one of the most unsettling ironies of the early Christian tradition.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Forgeries, Lies, Deceptions, and the Writings of the New Testament

WHEN I GIVE PUBLIC TALKS about the books that did not make it into the New Testament, people often ask me about apocryphal tales they have heard. What do we know about the "lost years" of Jesus, that gap of time between when he was twelve and thirty? Is it true that he went to India to study with the Brahmins? Was Jesus an Essene? Don't we have a death warrant from Pontius Pilate ordering Jesus's execution? And so on.

Very few of the apocryphal stories that people hear today come from the ancient forgeries I have been examining in this book. Instead, they come from modern forgeries that claim to represent historical facts kept from the public by scholars or "the Vatican." The real facts, however, are that these mysterious accounts have uniformly been exposed as fabrications perpetrated by well-meaning or mischievous writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their exposure, however, has done little to stop laypeople from believing them.

Modern Forgeries, Lies, and Deceptions

I DISCUSS FOUR MODERN forgeries here, just to give you a taste of the kinds of things that have been widely read. All four,

and many others, are discussed and demolished in two interesting books by bona fide scholars of Christian antiquity, Edgar Goodspeed, a prominent American New Testament scholar of the mid-twentieth century, and Per Beskow, a Swedish scholar of early Christianity writing in the 1970s.[1]

The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ

One of the most widely disseminated modern forgeries is called *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*.[2] From this account we learn that Jesus went to India during his formative teen years, the "lost years" before his public ministry, and there learned the secrets of the East. The book made a big splash when it appeared in English in 1926; but as it turns out, it had already been exposed as a fraud more than thirty years earlier. The reading public, it is safe to say, has a short attention span.

The book was first published in France in 1894 as *La vie inconnue de Jésus Christ,* by a Russian war correspondent named Nicolas Notovitch. Almost immediately it was widely disseminated and translated. In one year it appeared in eight editions in French, with translations into German, Spanish, and Italian. One edition was published in the United Kingdom, and three separate editions in the United States.

The book consisted of 244 paragraphs arranged in fourteen chapters. Notovitch starts the book by explaining how he "discovered" it. In 1887, he was allegedly traveling in India and Kashmir, where he heard from lamas of Tibet stories about a prophet named Issa, the Arabic form (roughly) of the name Jesus. His further travels took him to the district of Ladak, on the border between India and Tibet, to the famous Tibetan Buddhist monastery of Hemis. While there he heard additional stories and was told that written records of the life of Issa still survived.

Notovitch left the monastery without learning anything further. But after a couple of days he had a bad accident, falling off his horse and breaking his leg. He was carried back to the monastery to recuperate and, while there, came to be on friendly terms with the abbot. When Notovitch inquired about the stories of Issa, the abbot agreed to give him the full account. He produced two thick volumes, written in Tibetan, and began to read them out loud to Notovitch, in the presence of a translator who explained what the texts said, while Notovitch took notes.

The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ is the published edition of the careful notes that Notovitch allegedly took. When Jesus was thirteen, according to the account, he joined a caravan of merchants to go to India to study their sacred laws. He spent six years with the Brahmins, learning their holy books, the Vedas. But Jesus was completely disenchanted with the Indian caste system and openly began to condemn it. This raised the ire of the Brahmins, who decided to put him to death.

Jesus fled to join a community of Buddhists, from whom he learned Pali, the language of Theraveda Buddhism, and mastered the Buddhist texts. He next visited Persia and preached to the Zoroastrians. Finally, as a twenty-nine-year-old, armed with all the sacred knowledge of the East, he returned to Palestine and began his public ministry. The narrative concludes by summarizing his words and deeds and giving a brief account of his death. The story of his life was then allegedly taken by Jewish merchants back to India, where those who had known Issa as a young man realized that it was the same person. They then wrote down the full account.

Although the narrative of *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ* may sound like a rather second-rate novel, it was published as a historically factual account and was widely believed as providing the key to the questions that Christians had long asked about the lost years of Jesus. What was he doing then? And how had he

acquired such extensive and compelling religious knowledge before beginning his public ministry?

It was not long, however, before scholars interested in historical fact began to question the account and to expose it as a complex hoax. The tale was taken on by no less eminent an authority than Max Müller, the greatest European scholar of Indian culture of the late nineteenth century, who showed that the tale of the "discovery" of the book and the stories it told were filled with insurmountable implausibilities. If this great book was a favorite at the monastery of Hemis, why is it not found in either of the comprehensive catalogues of Tibetan literature? How is it that the Jewish merchants who went to India with tales of Jesus happened to meet up with precisely the Brahmins who knew Issa as a young man—out of the millions of people in India? And how did Issa's former associates in India realize, exactly, that the crucified man was their former student?

In 1894 an English woman who had read the *Unknown Life* visited Hemis monastery. She made inquiries and learned that no Russian had ever been there, no one had been nursed back to health after breaking his leg, and they had no books describing the life of Issa. The next year a scholar, J. Archibald Douglas, went and interviewed the abbot himself, who informed him that there had been no European with a broken leg in the monastery during his fifteen years in charge of the community. Moreover, he had been a lama for forty-two years and was well acquainted with Buddhist literature. Not only did he never read aloud a book about Issa to a European or to anyone else; he was certain that no such book as *The Unknown Life* existed in Tibet.

Additional internal implausibilities and inaccuracies of the story are exposed by both Goodspeed and Beskow. Today there is not a single recognized scholar on the planet who has any doubts about the matter. The entire story was invented by Notovitch,

who earned a good deal of money and a substantial amount of notoriety for his hoax.

The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness

An equally interesting modern apocryphon, *The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness,* deals not with the beginning of Jesus's adult life, before his ministry, but with its ending and aftermath.[3] The account comes in the form of a letter written, in Latin, seven years after Jesus's crucifixion, from a leader of the mysterious Jewish sect of the Essenes in Jerusalem to another Essene leader who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. All elements of the supernatural are completely stripped away from the account's description of Jesus's life and death. Jesus is shown to have led a completely human life and to have died a completely human death. But not on the cross. Jesus survived his own crucifixion and lived for another six months.

The account was first published in German, in Leipzig, in 1849. English editions, all claiming to be authentic, were published in 1907, 1919, and 1975. There were also translations into French and Swedish.

The Latin letter was allegedly discovered on a parchment scroll in an old Greek monastery in Alexandria by a missionary who thought that its message was dangerous and so tried to destroy it. It was saved, however, by a learned Frenchman, who translated the account into German. The narrative was then brought to Germany by the Freemasons, understood to be modern-day descendants of the Essenes.

According to the account, Jesus himself was an Essene. When he was crucified, according to this "eyewitness," he did not expire. He was taken from the cross and restored to life by Joseph

of Arimathea and Nicodemus, fellow Essenes, who knew the secret arts of healing preserved by the sect. When the women visiting the tomb thought they saw angels, these were Essene monks wearing their white robes. The women misunderstood that Jesus had been raised, when in fact he had never died. He did die, however, six months later, from the wounds he had sustained.

It has not been difficult for scholars to expose this Gospel as another fraud. The "eyewitness," allegedly an Essene, has no understanding of what the Essenes were really like. Today we know a good deal about this Jewish group, thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were unavailable to the forger, since they were discovered nearly a century after he produced his account. Nothing in the story corresponds to the historical realities of the group. For one thing, there is no way an Essene in Jerusalem would write his account in Latin, of all things.

There are other considerable problems. The account indicates that it was written seven years after the crucifixion, yet it explicitly mentions, by name, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which were not written until forty to sixty years after Jesus's death. Moreover, these books were not known as a *group* of writings ("the four Gospels") until the end of the second century. Finally the exclusion of everything supernatural in the account is a thoroughly modern, post-Enlightenment concern, not an ancient one.

And, in fact, a modern scholar has shown where this concern, and indeed the entire story, came from. In 1936, a famous German scholar of the New Testament, Martin Dibelius, demonstrated that *The Crucifixion of Jesus* was virtually lifted, wholesale, from a now rather obscure work of historical fiction written by the German rationalist K. H. Venturini, *The Natural History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth* (two volumes, 1800–1802). Here too Jesus was an Essene whose life had nothing supernatural about it and who did not actually die on the cross, but was

revived by Joseph of Arimathea. The author of *The Crucifixion of Jesus* simply took Venturini's two-volume work, condensed it into a readable booklet, and tried to pass it off as a historical account, when in fact it was a modern fabrication.

THE DEATH SENTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

One of the striking and, to many people, surprising facts about the first century is that we don't have any Roman records, of any kind, that attest to the existence of Jesus. We have no birth certificate, no references to his words or deeds, no accounts of his trial, no descriptions of his death—no reference to him whatsoever in any way, shape, or form. Jesus's name is not even mentioned in any Roman source of the first century.[4] This does not mean, as is now being claimed with alarming regularity, that Jesus never existed. He certainly existed, as virtually every competent scholar of antiquity, Christian or non-Christian, agrees, based on clear and certain evidence. But as with the vast majority of all persons who lived and died in the first century, he does not appear in the records of the Roman people.

That is why the alleged discovery of an official copy of Pilate's *Death Sentence* made such an enormous impact in Europe and the United States when it was announced in the mid-nineteenth century.[5] The discovery was first mentioned in the French paper *Le Droit* in the spring of 1839. It was soon exposed as a fraud, but it resurfaced again in Germany ten years later and repeatedly elsewhere, including the United States, for many decades afterward.

The *Death Sentence* was allegedly found on a copper plate discovered in the southern Italian city of Aquila, near Naples, all the way back in 1280. A group of workers was said to have been excavating for Roman antiquities, when they uncovered an ancient marble vase. Inside the vase was a copper plate inscribed in

Hebrew. When the text was translated, it was found to contain an official copy of Jesus's death warrant issued by Pontius Pilate. On the reverse side were directions for the warrant to be sent to all the tribes of Israel.

The plate allegedly came to be lost, but it was rediscovered during the French occupation of the Kingdom of Naples in 1806–15. When it was published a couple of decades later, it was touted as "the most impressive legal document in existence." In it, "Pontius Pilate, the acting governor of lower Galilee" states that "Jesus of Nazareth shall suffer death on the cross." This is said to have happened in the seventeenth year of the reign of the emperor Tiberius (31 CE), on March 27, "in the most holy city of Jerusalem."

The reason for the death sentence was that Jesus had committed six crimes. He was a seducer; he was seditious; he was an enemy of the law; he falsely called himself the Son of God; he called himself the king of Israel; and he entered the Temple followed by a multitude carrying palm branches. The death warrant is signed by four witnesses: Daniel Robani, Joannus Robani, Raphael Robani, and "Capet, a citizen."[6]

A top-flight scholar such as Edgar Goodspeed had no difficulty exposing the entire document as a hoax. It made no sense for a Roman official to try to justify his conviction of a criminal to the Jewish people or to send the justification to the "tribes of Israel," which had not in fact existed for many centuries. Pilate, a Roman official, would not have written in Hebrew, a language he didn't know. Pilate was not the governor of lower Galilee, but of Judea. As a non-Jew, he never would have referred to Jerusalem as "the most holy city." March 27 is a modern form of dating unknown to the ancient world. The term "Robani," used for three of the witnesses, appears to be a mistaken form of "Rabban," which means "teacher" the author probably made the mistake because in direct address, such as in John 20:16, the word is spelled

"Rabbouni." Joannus is not an ancient name in any of the relevant languages. Capet is a French name. And there is no Hebrew word for "citizen."

There are more problems, but these are enough to illustrate the case. Whoever made this account up did a rather poor job of it, even though his hoax had wide success, in both Europe and the United States, for over a century.

The Long-Lost Second Book of Acts

In 1904, the Anglican priest and physician Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie published a book called the *Long-Lost Second Book of Acts,* which, among other things, describes the teachings of Mary, the mother of Jesus, about reincarnation.[7] It is called the "second book" of Acts, because it begins by describing what happened to the apostle Paul after the events narrated in the New Testament book of Acts.

After being released from his Roman imprisonment, mentioned in Acts 28, Paul allegedly planned to go to Spain and then to Britain. But he eventually decides, instead, to go to Palestine. When he arrives, he goes to Jerusalem, to the house of the disciple John, where he finds Mary, the mother of Jesus, along with seven of the disciples. An elderly woman now, Mary prays for her death, and the angel Gabriel appears to tell her that her prayer is to be answered.

From her deathbed, reflecting on her mortality, Mary then divulges the secret doctrine of reincarnation. She herself has gone through seven incarnations; among other things she has been the wife of Noah, the woman who loved Zarathustra, the one who loved Siddhartha, and later still the one who loved Socrates.

Just before her death a storm comes, and Mary leads the disciples off to the Mount of Olives. Jesus appears from heaven and takes her in his arms. He tells the disciples that he too has had

several previous incarnations, as Abel, Noah, Zarathustra, and Socrates.

This book is so obviously a fiction that it is hard to imagine its author expecting anyone to take it seriously. But given the reading public, who knows? Goodspeed, at any rate, thought that it was "simply a modern effort to claim that the Virgin Mary and Jesus himself endorsed the doctrine of reincarnation," and that "Guthrie doubtless thought it so transparent a device that it would deceive nobody."[8]

Other Hoaxes and Deceptions

There are of course many other modern apocrypha that try to report on what Jesus and those associated with him really did. A book called *The Confession of Pontius Pilate* tells the story of Pilate going into exile in Vienna, where he feels deep remorse for what he did to Jesus and eventually commits suicide. Among other things, this account refers to a story in which Mary Magdalene presents the Roman emperor Tiberius with an Easter egg dyed red.[9] In *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve* Jesus is said to espouse a strictly vegetarian view in opposition to those who kill and eat animals. In this inventive narrative Jesus is said not to have eaten lamb at the Passover and to have fed the multitudes not with five loaves and two fish, but with five melons.[10]

One could argue that hoaxes are created not only by obscure figures trying to sensationalize accounts of Jesus (Jesus studied with the Brahmins!) or to authenticate their particular worldviews (Jesus was a vegetarian!), but also by scholars who may have had obscure reasons of their own.

One of the wildly popular books about Jesus during the 1960s and 1970s was Hugh Schonfield's *The Passover Plot: A New Interpretation of the Life and Death of Jesus*.[11] Schonfield was a brilliant and widely acknowledged scholar of ancient Judaism,

with a complete set of bona fide credentials. But his historical reconstruction of what really happened to Jesus reads more like a Hollywood production than serious scholarship.

The short story is that Jesus from an early age "knew" that he was the messiah and so manipulated events during his public ministry to make it appear that he was fulfilling prophecy. In particular, he plotted with his disciples to feign his own death for the sins of others. He arranged to be drugged on the cross (when he was given the gall and vinegar, it was medicinal), so that his vital signs would slow down and he would appear dead. He would then be revived and appear to have been raised from the dead. The plot failed, however. Jesus had not counted on a Roman soldier spearing him in the side on the cross. He revived only briefly and was removed from the tomb by prior arrangement with coconspirators (not the disciples). He died of his wounds soon thereafter and was reburied elsewhere. The disciples, however, discovered the empty tomb and mistakenly thought they saw Jesus alive afterwards. They then proclaimed that he had been raised from the dead. And thus started Christianity.

The Passover Plot is not a forgery, of course. The author of the account, who writes in his own name, is a serious historian and lets his readers know it. And it is not exactly a fabrication, in that he claims that he is basing his account on historical research. Moreover, he presents it as a historical study. But as creative as it is, the major premise of the account is completely made up; there is no historical truth to it.

As a final example I might mention, again, the case involving one of the twentieth century's truly eminent scholars of early Christianity, Columbia professor Morton Smith. Smith claimed to have discovered a lost, alternate version of the Gospel of Mark. The account of the discovery appeared in two books Smith published in 1973, one a detective-like narrative for popular

audiences and the other an erudite, hard-hitting research monograph for scholars.[12] In them Smith stated that in 1958, while visiting a monastery near Jerusalem, he discovered a handwritten copy of a letter, in Greek, by a second-century church father, Clement of Alexandria, in which he claimed that the author of Mark had published a second edition of his Gospel. This "Secret Gospel," as it came to be known, included a couple of stories not found in Mark, stories that sound mysterious and strange, about Jesus and his relationship with a young man he had raised from the dead.

Smith argued that this relationship was homosexual and that it provided evidence that Jesus had engaged in sexual activities with the naked men that he baptized during his ministry. Needless to say, Smith's books caused quite a stir. His scholarly book provided serious evidence that this really was a letter from Clement of Alexandria and that Clement really did know of such a Gospel. But since Smith's death in 1991, a number of scholars have come forward to argue that the letter is not authentic, that it was forged by none other than Smith himself. Two books have been published on the matter in recent years, both coming to the same conclusion, but on different grounds.[13] Other scholars, including those who knew Smith well, do not think so, and the debate goes on.[14]

Christian Forgeries, Lies, and Deceptions

THIS ISSUE OF MODERN hoaxes brings me back to a question I have repeatedly asked in my study of forgeries: "Who would *do* such a thing?" I hope by now you will agree with my earlier answer: "Lots of people." And for lots of reasons. And not just modern people. We have instances of Christian forgeries not only today, but also in the Middle Ages, in late antiquity, and in

the time of the New Testament. From the first century to the twenty-first century, people who have called themselves Christian have seen fit to fabricate, falsify, and forge documents, in most instances in order to authorize views they wanted others to accept.

My particular interest in this book, of course, is with the forgeries of the early Christian church. No one doubts that there were lots of them. Today we have only a fraction of the ones that were produced in antiquity, as the vast majority of them have been lost or destroyed. But what we have is more than enough to give us a sense of how prominent the practice of forgery was. We have numerous Gospels, letters, treatises, and apocalypses that claim to be written by people who did not write them. The authors who called themselves Peter, Paul, John, James, Philip, Thomas, or—pick your name!—knew full well they were not these people. They lied about it in order to deceive their readers into thinking they were authority figures.

Some of these writings made it into the Bible. There are New Testament letters claiming to be written by Peter and Paul, for example, and James and Jude. But these books were written by other, unknown authors living after the apostles themselves had died. When the real authors of these books claimed to be apostles, they were consciously involved in deception. This practice was widely talked about in the ancient world and was almost always condemned as lying, illegitimate, and just plain wrong. But authors did it anyway.

I'm not saying that the authors who engaged in this activity were necessarily violating the dictates of their own conscience. We have no way of knowing what they really thought about themselves or about what they were doing. All we know is that when ancient people talked about the practice, they did not say positive things about it. Books that were forged were called false and illegitimate.

But one can imagine that the authors themselves may not have seen it this way. Whenever we have a record of those being caught in the act, they try to justify what they did. The second-century author who fabricated the story of Paul and Thecla, mentioned earlier, claimed he did it out of "love for Paul." The fifth-century forger Salvian of Marseille claimed he thought no one would think he meant it when he called himself Timothy and that he didn't mean any harm by it. And after all, no one would take seriously a book written by Salvian, whereas a book by Timothy might be widely read (see Chapter 1).

It is possible that many of the authors whose works we have considered, both within and outside of the New Testament, felt completely justified in what they were doing. If so, they were accepting the ancient view, held by many people still today, that lying is the right thing to do in some instances (as mentioned in Chapter 1). In the ancient world, this view was based on the idea that there could be such a thing as a "noble lie," a lie that serves a noble cause. If a doctor needs to lie to a patient in order to get her to take the medicine she needs, then that can be a good form of deception. If a commander-in-chief needs to lie to his troops that reinforcements are about to arrive in order to inspire them to fight more courageously, then that can be a good thing. Some lies are noble.

Other Christian authors, most notably Augustine, took precisely the opposite line, arguing that lying in all its forms was bad. Very bad. Very, very bad. It was not to be engaged in, no matter what. For Augustine, even if a lie could guarantee that your young daughter would not spend eternity in the fires of hell, but would enjoy the eternal bliss of heaven, that was not enough to justify telling the lie. You should never lie, period.

Most early Christians probably disagreed with Augustine, which is why he had to argue his point so strenuously. And most people today probably disagree as well. Most of us see lying as a

complicated matter. Ethicists, philosophers, and religious scholars all disagree, even today, on when lying is appropriate and when it is not.[15] At the end of the day, this is a question that each and every one of us needs to decide for ourselves, based on our own circumstances and the specific situations we find ourselves in. Maybe sometimes it is okay to lie.

Maybe it is okay for parents to lie to their children about their own religious beliefs, to tell them that God exists even though they don't actually think so. Maybe it is okay for a spouse to lie to her partner about her extramarital affair, if it will prevent him from going through great turmoil and pain. Maybe it is okay to lie to one's parent about the prognosis after surgery, if it will keep the beloved parent from worrying about dying before their time. Maybe it is okay for church leaders to lie to their congregations about their personal beliefs or their less than perfect past, if they have to be seen as respected and stalwart leaders of the community. Maybe it is okay for elected officials to lie about budgets or deficits, shortfalls or windfalls, possible outcomes of policies, foreign intelligence, or the known outcomes of war—if the ends are sufficiently important to require lies instead of the truth.

And if lying is justified in some instances, what better reason for lying than to get people to understand and believe the truth? What would make better sense than writing a book that embodies a lie about a relatively unimportant matter (who *really* wrote this) in order to accomplish what really does matter (the truth being proclaimed)?

On the other hand, maybe the authors who forged these texts were wrong. Maybe they should not have tried to deceive their readers. Maybe it is better always to tell the truth, to stand by the truth, to be willing to take the consequences of the truth, even if you would much prefer the consequences of telling the lie.

Maybe children have the right to know what parents honestly believe. Maybe it is better for a spouse to tell her partner about an extramarital affair, if the alternative is to live a life of deceit and distrust. Maybe a dying parent (or grandparent, sibling, or anyone else) has the right to know that death is imminent, so he or she can prepare for the inevitable. Maybe it is better for church leaders not to mislead their people, but to tell them what they honestly know to be true (e.g., about church finances or about their own sinful past) or what they honestly believe (e.g., about God or the Bible). Maybe it is better for our elected officials to come clean and tell us the truth, rather than mislead us so as to be authorized to do what they desperately want to do domestically or on foreign soil. Maybe, on the whole, truth is better than lying.

To be sure, most people, in most circumstances, present, past, and very distant past, realize that there are times when it might be right and good to lie, if, for example, it can save a life or keep someone from physical harm. But the reality is that most of our lies are not so weighty. Certainly the lies manufactured by the forgers of early Christian texts were not told in order to protect life and limb. They were told in order to deceive readers into thinking that the authors of these books were established authority figures. If these texts were produced by reliable authorities, then what they say about what to believe and how to live must be true. True teachings were based on lies.

At the same time, the authors of these lies were no doubt like nearly everyone else in the world, ancient and modern; they too probably did not want to be lied to and deceived. But for reasons of their own they felt compelled to lie to and deceive others. To this extent they did not live up to one of the fundamental principles of the Christian tradition, taught by Jesus himself, that you should “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Possibly they felt that in their circumstances the Golden Rule did

not apply. If so, it would certainly explain why so many of the writings of the New Testament claim to have been written by apostles, when in fact they were not.

NOTES

Introduction: Facing the Truth

1. I am outlining here just the "orthodox" views that ended up winning the early Christian battles over what to believe. There were lots of Christians who held other views, as we will see later in the book. For further reflections, see my book *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
2. Thus, for example, Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.2–4; 4.26; see also Tertullian *Prescription Against Heresies*.
3. This is why there is such a close connection in Christian antiquity between the content of a writing and its claim to authorship, as we will see. It was widely thought that if a writing promoted "false teachings," then it certainly could not have been produced by an established authority. In other words, the decision about who authored a work (an apostle?) was often made on the basis of whether the teachings in the work were acceptable. See the discussion of the Gospel of Peter in Chapter 2.

Chapter 1: A World of Deceptions and Forgeries

1. The authoritative discussion of the Hitler diaries, told with flair and in precise detail, is found in

Robert Harris, *Selling Hitler (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986).*

2. For a fascinating account by one of modern times' most adroit forgery experts, see Charles Hamilton, *Great Forgers and Famous Fakes: The Manuscript Forgers of America and How They Duped the Experts,* 2nd ed. (Lakewood, CO: Glenbridge, 1996).
3. The story is told by the Greek historian Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of the Philosophers* (5.92–93).
4. For a collection of some of the most interesting, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books That Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a more comprehensive collection, see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).
5. Tertullian *On Baptism* 17. See also the discussion of ancient fictions about Paul in Chapter 3.
6. This is my own count.
7. As we will see later in Chapter 3, some scholars have maintained that the allegedly forged writing the author of 2 Thessalonians is referring to is none other than 1 Thessalonians!
8. Eusebius *Church History* 7.25.
9. Jerome *The Lives of Famous Men* 4.
10. Didymus the Blind, *Comments on the Catholic Epistles* (never translated into English), in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* 39, 1774.
11. Clement of Alexandria *Miscellanies* 2.52.6.

12. This has recently been argued in Clare Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon: The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

13. There may be some question, however, about Xenophon. The Greek philosopher Plutarch maintained that Xenophon used the pen name precisely to lend more credibility to his account by having it written by an outside party rather than writing about himself in the first person. If so, this is a pen name "with an edge."

14. For reasons for thinking that the Gospel of Matthew was not really written by the disciple Matthew, see Chapter 7, and in greater depth, John Meier, "Matthew, Gospel of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:618–41.

15. Galen *Commentary on Hippocrates' On the Nature of Man* 1.42.

16. Smith wrote two books about the discovery and its importance for understanding early Christianity and the historical Jesus, one an intriguing detective-like story for popular audiences, *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel of Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), and the other a hard-hitting analysis for scholars, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973). Recent years, however, have seen a spate of publications by scholars arguing that Smith in fact forged the document. See especially Stephen Carlson, *The Gospel Hoax: Morton Smith's Invention of Secret Mark* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005); and

Peter Jeffries, *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled: Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness in a Biblical Forgery* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007). See also my discussion in Chapter 8.

17. Josephus *Jewish Wars* 1.26.3; trans. William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979).

18. See Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum* (Munich: Beck, 1971), p. 145.

19. For an English translation, see R. J. J. Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas," in James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 2:7–34.

20. Martial *Epigrams* 7.12; 7.72; 10.3; 10.33. I am not saying, of course, that in this or any of the other cases I mention we actually know the real motivations of the forger. What we do know is that Martial read his motivations in this way.

21. Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 10.3.

22. Pausanius *Description of Greece* 6.18.5.

23. The New Testament book of Revelation, written by an unknown John, is a very rare exception.

24. One of the most interesting discussions is in the writings of the church father Tertullian, who asked how the book of *Enoch,* written by the famous figure Enoch—a man who never died, but was taken up to heaven while still living seven generations after Adam—could have survived down to his, Tertullian's, own day. If there was a worldwide flood after

Enoch's time in the days of Noah, wouldn't the book have perished? Tertullian goes out of his way to explain how it could, in fact, have survived the flood. Why does Tertullian have to go to the trouble of explaining this? Because he genuinely believed that it was written by Enoch. Tertullian was no dummy—far from it. He was one of the real intellectuals of the Christian third century. It is anachronistic for modern-day scholars to think that ancients must have seen through the ruse of apocalyptic forgery and recognized that the books produced were simply following the requirements of the genre.

25. Porphyry *Isagoge* pr. I.

26. For the letter and a full discussion of it, see A. E. Haefner, "A Unique Source for the Study of Ancient Pseudonymity," *Anglican Theological Review* 16 (1934): 8–15.

27. It is almost always claimed by scholars dealing with Christian pseudepigrapha that the author of the so-called *Acts of Paul* (or *Acts of Paul and Thecla*) was caught and punished. That is true, but his crime was not committing forgery. As I point out in Chapter 3 in greater detail, the *Acts of Paul* is not a book that claims to be written *by* Paul; it claims to be a true account *about* Paul. The author was punished not for lying about his identity, but for fabricating a fictitious account and trying to pass it off as a historical record.

28. Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

29. See Raffaella Cribbiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

30. In Chapter 4 I deal with other explanations that try to sanitize the practice as well, including the claim that apparent forgeries can be explained by authors having used secretaries who used a different writing style and altered the content of what the authors wanted to say.

31. In addition, some ancient authors described the penning of works in a name other than one's own with the Greek and Latin equivalents of our verb "to make" (as in "to create," "to forge") or "to make up" (i.e., to "fabricate").

32. The most thorough examination is now forty years old, but it has never been equaled, let alone surpassed. Most New Testament scholars, alas, have never read it—Speyer's *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*. Also valuable, though considerably less thorough, is Norbert Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangabe: Zur Erklärung der frühchristlichen Pseudepigraphie* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1975). Most work on forgery in early Christianity focuses on the question of whether any pseudepigraphical writings made it into the New Testament. The most recent work along these lines is Armin Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). Together these authors give a comprehensive survey of all the ancient sources on forgery. And all of them agree that forgers intended to deceive their readers.

33. Herodotus *Histories* 7.6.
34. Plutarch *The Oracles at Delphi* 407B.
35. Athenaeus *The Banqueters* 13.611B.
36. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung,* p. 3; translation mine.
37. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.7.
38. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.2.14–18.
39. Plato *Republic* 382C; 389B; Heliodorus *Ethiopica* I.26.6.
40. The fullest and most compelling study of Augustine's view of lying is David J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2004).
41. Origen in his lost book the *Miscellanies,* discussed by Jerome in *Against Rufinus* 1.18; Clement *Miscellanies* 7, 9, 53, 1–4.

Chapter 2: Forgeries in the Name of Peter

1. In the fuller account of the story, George's father is so proud of his son for speaking the truth in the face of possible adversity that he takes him into his arms and praises him to the heavens.
2. There are a number of interesting books on lying for a general audience. One of the most influential has been Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life,* 3rd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1999).
3. For lying in antiquity, see especially the collection of essays in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, eds.,

Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

4. Exceptions *may* be some kinds of fantasy and science fiction, but even there plausibility is an important feature; postmodern novels, to no one's surprise, are a different kettle of fish.

5. Polybius *Histories* 2.56.10–12; trans. W. R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library (New York: Putnam, 1922).

6. For English translations of these stories, collectively known as the *Acts of Peter,* see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 390–430; and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* trans. R. McL. Wilson, from the sixth German edition, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991–92), 2:271–321.

7. Eusebius *Church History* 6.12.

8. For an English translation, see Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

9. It is debated among scholars whether it is the "evildoer" who is punished by not having his legs broken or Jesus. I tend to think the former, since it doesn't make as much sense to think that the soldiers got angry at Jesus for something the other fellow said.

10. Some scholars have argued that these verses are not *actually* docetic. Here I'm not arguing that the author intended them to be read docetically. I'm simply saying that a hostile reader like Serapion may well have thought they were meant docetically, even if they were not.

11. Note again the relation of an "author" to "authority" and vice versa. In Serapion's view a false account such as the *Gospel of Peter* could not have been written by an authority such as Peter. And so the book was pseudepigraphical, written "under a false name" by someone else.

12. For English translations, see Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* trans. R. McL. Wilson, from the sixth German edition, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991–92), 2:493–94. I have taken my quotations from there.

13. Though not in Paul's own writings. See the discussion of Gal. 2:11–14 in the section on the noncanonical *Epistle of Peter* in Chapter 6.

14. I deal with the matter for a general audience in my book *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a more thorough and heavy-hitting study, see Harry Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). For a fully authoritative account, see Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

15. English translations can be found in Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament,* pp. 593–612; and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 2:620–38.

16. Eusebius classifies the *Apocalypse of Peter* among the *notha*—the "bastard," forged writings—rather than among the books he accepts as canonical. But the fact that he has to mention the book at all in this

context suggests that there were other Christians who maintained that it should be accepted as Scripture, as with most of the other books he classified as *notha,* such as the *Didache,* the *Epistle of Barnabas,* and the *Shepherd of Hermas.* The *Apocalypse of Peter* is also received as canonical (tentatively) in the late second-century Muratorian Canon, a document I discuss in Chapter 3.

17. For a discussion of the book, which includes evidence that it was not written by Peter, see J. H. Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:269–78.

18. Jesus of course would have been speaking Aramaic. The Aramaic word for "rock" is Kephas, and that is how Peter's name occurs when given in its Aramaic form. I am not saying that I think the account in Matthew is historically accurate in describing Peter as the "rock" of the church, but I do think it highly probably that Jesus renamed Simon "the Rock" during his public ministry.

19. It should not be objected that Peter did not actually see the crucifixion of Jesus and so was not a "witness" to his sufferings. Whoever wrote this book almost certainly did not have the Gospels to read; we can't know what he thought about Peter's involvement in Jesus's last hours.

20. For a discussion of the book, which includes evidence that it was not written by Peter, see J. H. Elliott, "Peter, Second Epistle of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* 5:282–87.

21. Simeon appears to be the Hebrew form of "Simon." Why the author mixes Hebrew (Simeon instead of Simon) with Greek (Peter instead of the Aramaic Kephas) is a puzzle.

22. Paul himself did not think that he was writing "Scripture." He was writing personal letters to his churches. They too treated these writings, when they received them, as personal correspondence. It was only later, after Paul's lifetime, that different churches and individuals collected these letters and started regarding them as Scripture. For insightful comments on the early collections of Paul's letters, see Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 58–65.

23. There are other reasons for assuming Peter did not write this letter. In 3:2 the author slips and refers to "your apostles" as if he is not one of them. Moreover, the author uses the book of Jude and so must have written later than that forged letter. And he knows 1 Peter (since he refers to this book as his "second" letter), which, as I will argue more fully now, could not have been by Peter either, but was written later, at least after the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70.

24. William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

25. Among the many excellent studies of ancient education systems, see especially the study of Raffaella Cribbiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

26. Catherine Hezser, *Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).
27. Mark Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); see also his more recent study, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
28. Jonathan Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 140–69.
29. The famous synagogue that tourists see on the site today was built centuries later.

Chapter 3: Forgeries in the Name of Paul

1. For an English translation, see J. K. Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 350–89; and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* trans. R. McL. Wilson, from the sixth German edition, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991–92), 2:213–70.
2. For a full account of the Thecla traditions, see Stephen Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
3. Tertullian *On Baptism* 17.
4. The classic study of Marcion, which is still worth reading today, was published by the great German scholar Adolf von Harnack in 1924; it has been partially translated into English by John E. Steely and

Lyle D. Bierma as *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1990). The most recent overview is Heikki Raïsänen, "Marcion," in Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen, eds., *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics"* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 100–124.

5. For an English translation, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 305–07. Some scholars date the Muratorian Canon to the fourth century, but this view has not proved convincing to most.

6. For an English translation, see Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament,* pp. 380–82; and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 2:254–57.

7. Benjamin White, "Reclaiming Paul? Reconfiguration as Reclamation in 3 Corinthians," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 497–523.

8. For an English translation, see Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament,* pp. 547–52; and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 2:46–52. My quotations here follow Schneemelcher's translation.

9. For a fuller description of Gnosticism, see Chapter 6.

10. The scholarly literature on the pastoral letters is so massive that it is difficult to know where to refer interested readers who want to see the basic arguments about their authenticity. Possibly it is best to start with Jerome D. Quinn, "Timothy and Titus, Epistles to," *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* ed. David Noel Friedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992),

6:560–71. As is true of everything I talk about in this book—as is true, in fact, for virtually anything any biblical scholar talks about—there are differences of opinion even here. For a representative of the minority view that Paul actually was the author of the pastoral letters, see the lively discussion in the introduction in Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

11. For example, Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter Writer in the Second Letter to Timothy* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1989).

12. Among other things, this means that if any one of these letters is forged, they're all forged.

13. A. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921).

14. This is the case even with scholars who want to argue that Paul did write the letters. One of the most recent studies is Armin Baum, "Semantic Variation Within the *Corpus Paulinum:* Linguistic Considerations Concerning the Richer Vocabulary of the Pastoral Epistles," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59 (2008): 271–92. Baum points out that in the other letters of Paul, the fewer total number of words that can be found in a letter means that there are fewer *different* words used. But not with the pastoral letters, which have fewer words than many of Paul's letters, but more *different* words. Baum still wants to think that these books are written by Paul, however, and so comes up with an explanation that sounds perhaps like a case of special pleading. In his view, Paul took more consideration and time with these letters than

his others, since he was composing them in writing rather than orally. That seems highly unlikely to me. Paul certainly put a lot of time and effort into composing letters like Romans and Galatians. Moreover, Baum doesn't cite any evidence to suggest that the Pastorals were composed in writing by Paul rather than dictated, by Paul or anyone else.

15. Unfortunately, the article is available only in German: Norbert Brox, "Zu den persönlichen Notizen der Pastoralbriefe," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 13 (1969): 76–94.

16. Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

17. Once again, the scholarship on this question is voluminous. A good place to start is Edgar Krenz, "Thessalonians, First and Second Epistles to the," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:515–23.

18. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977).

19. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

20. See J. Christiaan Beker, *Heirs of Paul: Paul's Legacy in the New Testament and in the Church Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

21. See Victor Paul Furnish, "Ephesians, Epistle to," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:535–42.

22. See Victor Paul Furnish, "Colossians, Epistle to the," *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* 1:1090–96.

23. Unfortunately, the book has never been translated into English: Walter Bujard, *Stilanalytische Untersuchungen zum Kolosserbrief: Als Beitrag zur Methodik von Sprachvergleichen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

Chapter 4: Alternatives to Lies and Deceptions

1. It didn't occur to me at the time that the author of 2 Timothy would have been speaking only about the Scriptures he knew, the "Old Testament," and that his doctrine of inspiration may not have coincided with my own view that the Bible was completely without error, a view that in fact came into existence only in modern times.

2. A partial exception may be the view of evangelical scholar Donald Guthrie, who tries to argue on historical, rather than dogmatic, grounds that there can be no forgeries in the New Testament; see his "The Development of the Idea of Canonical Pseudipigrapha in New Testament Criticism," *Vox Evangelica* 1 (1962): 43–59.

3. These views of Daniel and Ecclesiastes are almost universally held by critical scholars today. For an introductory discussion, see two of the leading textbooks on the Hebrew Bible in use throughout American universities today: John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004); and Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew*

Scriptures (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

4. Another approach is to acknowledge that false authorial claims do indeed constitute forgery—lies with the intent to deceive—but to insist that the Bible *should* not have such books in it. This is the claim of one of the most recent scholars of forgery who has come out of Germany, Armin Baum, who thinks that if it can be shown that a book really is forged, it should be removed from the New Testament (implied in his book *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001] and confirmed by private correspondence). As you might imagine, given such a view, Baum is reluctant to consider too many of the books of the New Testament forgeries. But he is willing to concede, for example, along with the vast majority of scholars, that 2 Peter is.

5. A. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 12.

6. A. W. Argyle, "The Greek of Luke and Acts," *New Testament Studies* 20 (1974): 445.

7. M. J. J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 40.

8. Andrew Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), p. lxx.

9. R. McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon* (London: Clark, 2005), p. 31.

10. For an assessment of how certain books came to be considered part of the canon of Scripture, see my

study *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). A fuller discussion can be found in Harry Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

11. Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 15–16.

12. Norbert Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangabe: Zur Erklärung der frühchristlichen Pseudepigraphie* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1975), p. 81; translation mine.

13. Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum* (Munich: Beck, 1971), p. 3; translation mine.

14. Kurt Aland, "The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 12 (1961): 39–49.

15. James Dunn, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," in *The Living Word* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 65–85.

16. David Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986).

17. Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 123.

18. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000), p. 8.

19. Two additional sources come from centuries later still and are of almost no historical worth, as I argue below.

20. The passage is discussed at some length, for example, in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung,* pp. 53–55.

21. Ibn Abi Usaybi'a, *Kitab 'uyun al-anba 'fi tabaqat al-atibba',* ed. 'Amir al-Najjar, 4 vols. (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-'Amma lil-Kitab, 2001), 1:244–45.

22. Iamblichus *Life of Pythagoras* 31.

23. See Leonid Zhmud, *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus* (Berlin: Akademie, 1997), p. 91.

24. See, for example, Holger Thesleff, *Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (Åbo: Åcademi, 1961).

25. Two later Neoplatonic philosophers, Olympiodorus and Elias, living some two and a half centuries after Iamblichus, make roughly similar comments (Olympiodorus *Prolegomenon* 13.4–14.4; Elias *In Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria* 128.1–22). But they are so long after the fact that they cannot help us know what was happening in the time of the New Testament, half a millennium earlier (any more than the editorial practices in vogue today can tell us what was happening in the 1500s). Moreover, the comments of Olympiodorus and Elias may ultimately derive from the tradition starting with Iamblichus, some two hundred fifty years earlier.

26. E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).
27. Richards, *Secretary,* p. 108.
28. Richards, *Secretary,* pp. 110–11.

Chapter 5: Forgeries in Conflicts with Jews and Pagans

1. See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995).
2. For an English translation of the Gospel of Nicodemus, see Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
3. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
4. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
5. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
6. Tertullian *Apology* 21.24; Eusebius *Church History* 2.2.
7. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
8. Tertullian *Apology* 21.24.
9. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
10. For a fuller discussion, see my *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*

(San Francisco: Harper-SanFrancisco, 2005), pp. 63–65.

11. In the history of the interpretation of the passage the question has always been, "What was he writing?" Some have thought that he must have been writing out the sins of the woman's accusers. Or a particularly apt quotation of scripture. Or a declaration of condemnation of unjust judges. Or something else!

12. Chris Keith, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

13. Augustine *On the Harmony of the Gospels* 1.10.

14. Other writings allegedly written by Jesus are referred to in several church fathers, such as Augustine (*Against Faustus* 28.4) and Leo the Great (*Sermon* 34.4).

15. My reasoning in this case is that it is not a letter that existed outside of its fictional context, a piece of correspondence that circulated independently as a writing of Jesus.

16. For English translations of both letters, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.

17. An English translation of excerpts of Egeria's diary is provided by Andrew Jacobs in Bart Ehrman and Andrew Jacobs, *Christianity in Late Antiquity, 300–450 CE: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 333–46.

18. Tertullian *Apology* 40; trans. S. Thelwell, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-*

Nicene Fathers (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

19. Minucius Felix *Octavius* 9.6–7; in G. W. Clarke, ed., *The Octavius of Minucius Felix* (Mahway, NJ: Paulist, 1974).
20. Minucius Felix *Octavius* 9.5.
21. For English translations of a range of accounts, see Herbert Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).
22. Eusebius *Church History* 9.5.
23. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14.136–46.
24. For an excellent study of the Sibyl and her oracles, see H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity,* ed. B. C. McGin (London: Routledge, 1988).
25. For a full analysis and translation of the surviving oracles, see John J. Collins, *Sibylline Oracles,* in James Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983–85), 1:317–472.
26. All translations are by Collins, in Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.*
27. Justin *First Apology* 20.
28. For example, the pagan critic Celsus around 177 *CE*, as quoted by the church father Origen in his book *Against Celsus* (5.61.615; 7.53.732; 7.56.734); also see a Latin oration attributed to the (Christian) emperor Constantine found in Eusebius's *Life of*

Constantine, in which the emperor claims that the pagan charges of forgery are false.

Chapter 6: Forgeries in Conflicts with False Teachers

1. John J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).
2. Thomas Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991); Richard DeMaris, *Colossian Controversy: Wisdom in Dispute at Colossae* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1994); Clinton Arnold, *Colossian Syncretism: The Interface Between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995); Troy Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit: Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).
3. I have taken all translations of the *Pseudo-Clementine Writings* from Thomas Smith, "The Pseudo-Clementine Literature," in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 8 (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).
4. They are called this because they consist of twenty sermons allegedly given by Clement, in which he tells his tales of journeys and adventures with the apostle Peter.
5. There has been a spate of books on the historical James in recent years. For a competent treatment by a good scholar (with whom I disagree on a number of points), see John Painter, *Just James: The*

Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition (Edinburgh: Clark, 1997).

6. See, for example, the discussion in my *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009), pp. 53–58.

7. Scholars have come up with four major possible explanations for these "we passages." Three of the four explanations simply don't seem to work. The traditional explanation is that the author really was Paul's companion. That view is problematic though, since the author makes so many mistakes about Paul's life and teachings that he doesn't seem to be a close companion. Other scholars have maintained that the author, whoever he was, had access to a companion of Paul's travel itinerary and inserted it in a few places, creating the odd use of "we" on occasion (since that was how the itinerary was worded). This is an attractive option, but it does not explain why the writing style and vocabulary of the "we passages" is virtually the same as the rest of Acts. If the itinerary came from a different author, you would expect the style to be different. Other scholars have argued that the author is using an age-old technique of describing travel narratives—especially those involving sea journeys—in the first person. But still other scholars have pointed out that there are lots of sea-travel narratives not written in the first person, so this does not seem to explain these passages. The fourth explanation is the one that seems to me to have the fewest problems: the author has edited these sections of Acts to make his readers assume

that he was actually with Paul for these parts of the story, even though he was not. This would explain why the "we" sections begin and end so abruptly: it was just a stylistic device used by the author to insert himself into the story in a few places.

8. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.14.1.

9. See note 6.

10. Scholars today are widely split on how to discuss Gnosticism or even whether to consider Gnosticism a single broad phenomenon. For three very different perspectives from leading scholars, see Karen King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1987); and Birger Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

11. For a fresh translation of the Nag Hammadi writings, see Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2007).

12. Epiphanius *The Medicine Chest* 26.

13. Whether Epiphanius actually knew and read these other books or instead was making them up is anyone's guess.

14. Both Didymus and Thomas mean "twin" Jude was his name. He is talked about as the twin of Jesus in the ancient Syrian book the *Acts of Thomas,* which describes his missionary journey to India after Jesus's death.

15. For an English translation, see Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures,* pp. 487–97. I have taken my quotations from there.
16. For an English translation, see Meyer, *Nag Hammadi Scriptures,* pp. 235–45. I have taken my quotations from there.
17. For an English translation, see Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* trans. R. McL. Wilson, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991–92), 1:249–84.

Chapter 7: False Attributions, Fabrications, and Falsifications: Phenomena Related to Forgery

1. Thus Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1950), 2:412–13.
2. It is included as part of the canon of the New Testament, for example, in a famous biblical manuscript of the fifth century, Codex Alexandrinus.
3. For the variety of expectations of what the future messiah would be like, see John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) and my brief discussion in Chapter 5.
4. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.7.11.
5. Papias indicates that he received this information from someone who had known the apostles; that is, it comes to us third-hand. See the next note.
6. For the full text of Papias's comments, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 2 vols., Loeb

Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2:103.

7. Tertullian *Against Marcion* 4.5.
8. I argue this case in my book *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009), pp. 102–12, and probably don't need to give all the arguments and information yet again here.
9. For an argument that the author intends to make his readers think he was Paul, see Clare Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
10. For an English translation, see Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers,* 2:3–83.
11. For an English translation, see Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
12. See David Dungan and J. K. Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
13. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
14. For an English translation, see Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*.
15. The fullest, most recent study is Reidar Aasgaard, *The Childhood of Jesus: Decoding the Apocryphal Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009).

16. See my *Jesus, Interrupted*. As I stress there, this view that the Gospels contain nonhistorical accounts is not just my idiosyncratic idea; it is the consensus of modern critical scholarship and has been for a very long time.

17. This is the subject of my earlier book *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005). Here I summarize just a few of the most important points.

18. See my *Misquoting Jesus,* pp. 65–68.

19. See the discussion in Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) or, more briefly, *Misquoting Jesus,* pp. 183–86.

20. Robert Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, eds., *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 22.

21. *The Architecture of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio,* trans. Joseph Gwilt (London: Priestley and Weale, 1826).

22. Polybius *Histories* 9.2.12.

23. Martial *Epigrams* 1.66; trans. Walter C. A. Ker, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

24. Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 2.60; 5.93; 8.54; trans. R. D. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931).

Chapter 8: Forgeries, Lies, Deceptions, and the Writings of the New Testament

1. Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha* (Boston: Beacon, 1956); Per Beskow, *Strange Tales About Jesus: A Survey of Unfamiliar Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).
2. Discussed in Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* pp. 3–14; and Beskow, *Strange Tales,* pp. 57–65.
3. See Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha*; Beskow, *Strange Tales,* pp. 20–28; 42–50.
4. By Roman source I mean any source written by a pagan author of the Roman Empire; Jesus is mentioned in Christian sources, of course, and twice in the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus, though by no other source of the first century.
5. See Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* pp. 92–96; Beskow, *Strange Tales,* pp. 16–24.
6. I have taken the translation from Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* pp. 92–93.
7. See Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* pp. 97–101.
8. Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* p. 101.
9. Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* pp. 45–49. This tale is based on old traditions, especially popular in the Byzantine Christianity, about Mary and a red egg, which arguably provide the origin for the custom of coloring Easter eggs.
10. According to Beskow, this account was written by the Anglican clergyman Gieon Ouseley (1835–1906), a committed vegetarian who wrote ten books on vegetarianism and the occult.

11. Hugh Schonfield, *The Passover Plot* (New York: Bantam, 1965).
12. See Chapter 1, n. 16.
13. See Chapter 1, n. 16.
14. One of Morton Smith's most avid supporters, who argues vehemently that the letter of Clement is authentic, is Scott Brown; his fullest study is *Mark's Other Gospel: Rethinking Morton Smith's Controversial Discovery* (Waterloo, ON: Laurier University Press, 2005).
15. For a popular treatment, see Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life,* 3rd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1999).

SEARCHABLE TERMS

Note: The pagination of this electronic edition does not match the edition from which it was created. To locate a specific passage, please use the search feature of your e-book reader.

Abgar, King, 162–163
Abraham, 30, 42, 194–196
abstinence teachings. *See* sexual abstinence teachings
Acts of Paul (and Thecla), 18, 81–83, 88, 103–104, 128–129, 233, 262, 270n27
Acts of Peter, 18, 50–52, 233
Acts of Peter and Paul, 155
Acts of Pilate, 172–173
Acts of the Apostles, 202–209; authorship of, 23, 206–209, 220–221, 286n7; differing from Paul's writings, 204–206, 208; as a forgery, 208–209; inaccurately aligning Paul with apostles, 63, 202–206; noting Peter's illiteracy, 75; Paul's conversion account, 191; summary of, 202–204
Adam, 30, 94
Aeschines, 247
afterlife, 6, 8, 64–65, 89, 106, 213. *See also* second coming beliefs
Against All Heresies, 221–222
Against Heresies (Irenaeus), 225
Aland, Kurt, 124
Alexander (son of Herod), 27, 40
Alexander the False Prophet (Lucian), 28
Anaximenes, 29

Ancient Literacy (Harris), 70–71
ancient world: copying texts, 240–241; historical writing, 47–49; libraries, 26–27; literacy and education, 70–73; notions of fiction, 45–48; plagiarism, 246–247; religion, 5–7; use of secretaries, 134; view of "noble lie," 41, 42, 263. *See also* forgery in the ancient world; Roman Empire
angels, 89, 112, 185
anonymous writing: to boost authority, 223–225; as equivalent to forgery, 119–120; included in New Testament, 10, 23, 220; wrongly attributed, 24, 140, 221–222, 249–250
anti-Semitism, 55–56, 59, 151–152
Antitheses (Marcion), 85–86
Apocalypse of John (Revelation), 21, 30, 64, 105
Apocalypse of Paul, 213
Apocalypse of Peter, 18, 30, 63–65, 274n16
apocalyptic forgeries, 18, 29–31
apocalyptic teachings, evangelical, 105–106
apologetics/apologists, 4, 169–170
apostles: apostolic succession, 7–8; forgeries associated with, 20, 217; Gospels formerly "memoirs of the," 225; as illiterate, 8; Paul's relationship to the, 61, 89, 199, 202–203, 205, 206; spirit-inspired writing from the, 123–125
Apostolic Constitutions, 20, 22, 35, 37, 160, 248–249
Apostolic Tradition, 249
Aramaic, 72, 74, 75, 76, 198
Aristotle, 26, 27, 31
asceticism, 32, 49, 94, 96, 185
Athenagoras, 169
Augustine, 41–42, 160–161, 263
Aurelian, Emperor, 27–28
authority, attribution and, 222–224

Babylon, 68
baptism, 82, 83, 111
Barnabas, 149, 229–232
Beker, J. Christiaan, 109
Beskow, Per, 252, 254
Bible. *See* New Testament; Old Testament
biblical "conduct codes," 2, 94
biblical infallibility, 3, 5, 115–117
biography, 46, 47
Birth of Mary, 213
Book of Thomas the Contender, 215–216
Brox, Norbert, 102, 123
Bruce, F. F., 109
Brutus, 134, 137
Buddhism and Jesus hoax, 252–254
Bujard, Walter, 113

Caldwell, Taylor, 79–81
canonical Gospels: as anonymous, 23, 24, 220–221; cast as continuous with Old Testament, 224–225; and the *Gospel of Peter,* 55–59; lack of resurrection accounts, 17, 57–58; misattributions of, 223–228; possible plagiarism in, 248
Capernaum, 74
celibacy teachings. *See* sexual abstinence teachings
Cerinthus, 21, 217
childbearing, 94, 100, 103
Christ. *See* Jesus
Christian apologists, 4, 169–170
Christianity: evangelical, 2–4, 105–106, 115–117, 145–146; legacy of lies and deceptions, 40–42, 261–265; messianic claims, 145–149; second coming beliefs, 105–106; violence and

conflict in, 143–145, 176–178. *See also* early Christianity; modern forgeries and hoaxes
Church History (Eusebius), 52–53, 54, 156, 162
church leaders: authorship of *1 Clement,* 222; debates over suspicious documents, 18–19, 21; development of hierarchy, 101–102; encouraging marriage of, 99–100, 103; forged documents to direct, 103; on lying, 41–42; on role of women, 82–83, 94, 103–105
Cicero, 134, 136, 137, 138
Claudius, Emperor, 155
Clement of Alexandria, 42, 261
Clement of Rome, 20, 62, 190, 222
Cleobius, 88, 89, 160
coauthoring theories, 77, 114, 136–137
Colossians, 112–114, 121, 128, 129, 185, 207
"conduct codes," 2, 94
Confession of Pontius Pilate, The, 259
Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, 213–214
Coptic church, 153
copying texts, 87, 240–242
Corinthian church, 101, 181, 222
creation, 88–89, 95–96
credibility motive, 8–9, 31–32
creeds, 6, 7
crucifixion of Jesus. *See* Jesus, crucifixion of
Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness, The, 254–256

Daniel, 30, 117, 131
Dante, 64
David (Aristotle commentator), 31
David, King, 146, 224
Dead Sea Scrolls, 255

debates, early Christian, 180–183, 218. *See also* false teachings
deceptions. *See* lies and deceptions
Decius, Emperor, 164
deicide, 149
deutero-Pauline letters, 92–93
Dibelius, Martin, 256
Didache, 248–249
Didascalia, 249
Didymus the Blind, 22
Diogenes Laertius, 29, 247
Dionysius (3rd-century scholar), 21
Dionysius the Renegade, 16–17, 27, 29
Diotimus, 29, 40
discovery narrative, 35
divine authority, 7–8
Divine Comedy (Dante), 64
divine knowledge/spark, 96, 210, 211, 214, 215
docetism, 53–54, 57, 59–60, 86, 89
Douglas, J. Archibald, 254

early Christian forgery: blaming Jews for crucifixion, 55–57, 148, 149–152, 171; church leader debates over, 18–19, 21, 22; emergence of, 8–11; evangelical views on, 115–117; false teachings put down by, 88–90, 94, 95, 103, 183–188, 216–218; falsehood to promote "truth," 144, 216, 217, 218, 250, 265; to fend off pagan attacks, 145, 170–173, 177–178; by Gnostics, 212–216; miracles in, 49–52; New Testament, 9–10, 65–70, 118, 262; noncanonical books, 17–19; overview on, 19–22, 139–141, 262; possible justifications for, 40–42, 262–265; in support of Paul, 87, 199–202; writings of Jesus, 159–163. *See also* pastoral letter forgeries; Pauline forgeries; Petrine forgeries; scholarly justification of forgery

early Christian forgery list: *Acts of Peter,* 50–52, 233; *Apocalypse of Peter,* 18, 30, 63–65; *Apostolic Constitutions,* 20, 22, 35, 37, 160; *Book of Thomas the Contender,* 215–216; Colossians, 112–114, 129–130, 185; *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter,* 213–214; Ephesians, 108–112, 129–130, 143–144; *Epistle of Peter,* 62–63; *Epistula Apostolorum,* 217; *Gospel of Nicodemus,* 150–152, 172–173; Hebrews, 22, 221, 229; James, 192–198; Jude, 186–188; *Letters of Paul and Seneca,* 18, 90–92, 114, 171; *Pseudo-Clementine Writings,* 62–63, 190–192; *Second Treatise of the Great Seth,* 161; Sibylline oracles, 174–176; 3 Corinthians, 88–90, 216; *Timothy to the Church,* 32–33. *See also* Acts of the Apostles; *Gospel of Peter;* pastoral letter forgeries; Pilate Gospels
early Christianity: based on conflict, 143–145; challenges of apostolic succession, 7–8; faith and works debate, 194–198; falsifications in, 240–245; marriage beliefs, 18, 82–83, 94, 99–100, 103–104, 105; overview on debates in, 180–183, 218; pagan opposition to, 67, 145, 165–170, 177; question of plagiarism, 247–249; and the Roman Empire, 163–164; rooted in truth claims, 5–7; salvation through Jesus in, 61, 81, 85, 99, 100, 109–111, 200; spiritual gifts and equality, 100–101; splits over sex, marriage, role of women, 82–83, 103–105. *See also* church leaders; early Christian forgery; fabrications; false attribution; false teachings; Gnosticism; Jewish/Christian conflicts; Jewish law and Christians; second coming beliefs; sexual abstinence teachings
Ecclesiastes, 117
Edessa, 162–163
Egeria, 163
Empedocles, 247
Enoch, 30
Ephesians, 108–113, 120, 128, 129, 136, 137, 138, 143–144, 197–198

Epicurus, 29, 40
Epiphanius, 212, 213
Epistle of Barnabas, 149, 229–232
Epistle of Peter, 62–63, 189–190, 204
Epistula Apostolorum, 217
equality, 101, 104
Eros, 27–28
Essenes, 255–256
ethical views, 40–42
Euripides, 26, 27
Eusebius, 21, 52–53, 54, 64, 156, 162, 173
evangelical Christians, 2–4, 105–106, 115–117, 145–146
Eve, 94
evidence, 4
exclusivity, religious, 6, 7

fabrications, 232–240; about Peter, 49–52; *Acts of Paul,* 81–83; *Acts of Peter and Paul,* 155; *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew,* 236–237; *Infancy Gospel of Thomas,* 237–239; in the New Testament, 239–240; overview on, 232–234; *Proto-Gospel of James,* 234–236
faith, and works, 194–198
false attribution, 220–232; *Epistle of Barnabas,* 229–232; to increase authority of writing, 222–223; misattribution of the Gospels, 223–228; mistaken, 221–222; New Testament, 220–221, 229; as pseudepigraphy, 24
false teachings, 180–218; attribution of the Gospels and, 225–226, 227; context and authorship, 267n3; and controversy surrounding Paul, 180–182, 188–189, 199–202; early Christian debates overview, 180–183, 218; forgeries to put down, 88–90, 94, 95, 103, 183–188, 216–218; forgery to promote, 8–9; of Marcion, 84–88; targeting Judaism / aligned

with Paul, 229–232. *See also* Gnosticism; Paul, forgeries in opposition to
falsehood. *See* lies and deceptions falsifications, 240–245
fiction, 45–48
1 Clement, 222
1 Corinthians, 93, 99, 100–101, 111, 193, 244–245
1 John, 23, 221, 223, 229
1 Kings, 224
1 Peter, 66–68, 75–76, 131, 134–139, 171–172, 199–200, 204
1 Samuel, 115, 224
1 Thessalonians, 93, 106–108, 113, 200
1 Timothy, 22, 94–100, 102–103, 138, 188, 208, 232, 244
Five Gospels, The (Jesus Seminar), 246
flesh, 88–90, 96, 211–212, 214–217
the flesh, 89–90, 96
forgery, literary: as deceptive, 9, 10, 25, 36, 37–38, 40; defining, 24–25; detection of, 33; Hitler diaries, 13–15; "honest," 121; intention of, 25–26, 38–39, 141, 249; as multifunctional, 170–171; techniques of forgers, 19–20, 33–35. *See also* early Christian forgery; modern forgeries and hoaxes; motivation for forgery; scholarly justification of forgery
forgery in the ancient world: as accepted practice, 119–120, 123–125; apocalyptic, 30–31; condemnation of, 9, 25, 36–37, 39, 140–141, 262; Dionysius's ruse, 16–17; intention to deceive, 38–39, 119–123, 126; methods of, 33–35; negative words to describe, 37–38, 140; prevalence of, 15, 36; punishment for, 39–40. *See also* early Christian forgery
fundamentalist Christians, 2–4, 105–106, 115–117, 145–146

Galatians, 61, 93, 99, 101, 110, 113, 134, 189, 191, 193, 195, 204–205
Galen, 26–27, 36–37, 39

Galilee, 73–74
Genesis, 195, 196
genre, literary, 46
Gentile Christians and the law. *See* Jewish law and Christians
George Washington illustration, 44–45
Gnosticism, 209–217; divine knowledge/spark in, 96, 210, 211, 214, 215; forgeries in opposition to, 216–217; forgeries to promote, 161, 212–216; overview on, 209–212; pastoral letter forgeries linked to, 95–96; salvation through transcendence of the flesh, 96, 211, 214; views on Jesus, 96, 182, 210, 211–212, 214
God: in apocalyptic writings, 30; Bible as inspired by, 115–116, 117; gift of the Spirit of, 100; in Gnosticism, 95–96, 210–211; Marcion's beliefs on, 85–89, 95, 231; messiah from, 146–149; objective knowledge of, 3; as truth, 41; use of deception by, 42
Golden Rule, 265
"good works" teachings, 99, 110, 194–198
Goodspeed, Edgar, 252, 254, 258
Gospel of Nicodemus, 150–152, 172–173
Gospel of Peter, 52–60; account of Jesus's death and resurrection, 17, 55–59; blaming Jews for crucifixion, 55–57, 149–150; early source information on, 52–54; fabrication in, 233; as forgery, 54, 59–60, 233; as fragmentary, 55, 59; as heretical, 88; intention of author, 38; rediscovery of, 52, 54–55
Gospel of Philip, 17, 31, 212, 213
Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, 236–237, 248
Gospel of the Holy Twelve, The, 259
Gospel of Thomas, 17, 31, 213
Gospels, New Testament. *See* canonical Gospels
Gospels, noncanonical, 17
Grafton, Anthony, 33
Great Lion of God (Caldwell), 79–81

Greek language proficiency, 71–76, 138–139, 198
Greek Septuagint, 67, 75, 76
Guthrie, Kenneth Sylvan, 258–259

Handing Over of Pilate, 157–159
Harris, William, 71
Harrison, A. N., 98
Hebrew Bible. *See* Old Testament
Hebrew language, 72–73, 75, 198
Hebrews, book of, 22, 23, 115, 221, 229
Heliodorus, 41
hell, 7, 18, 65
Hemis monastery, 252–253, 254
Heraclides of Pontus, 16–17, 27, 247
heresiologists, 221
heretical views. *See* false teachings
Herod, King, 27, 29, 40, 56, 149, 239
Herod Antipas, 153–154
Herodotus, 39
Hesiod, 247
Hezser, Catherine, 72–73
historical writing, 44–45, 47–49, 232–234
Hitler diaries, 13–15
Holy Spirit, gifts of the, 100–101
Holy Spirit-inspired forgery, 123–125
Homer, 247
Homilies, 190–192, 204
homonymous writing, 23
homosexual acts by Jesus, 261
hope, forgery to inspire, 29–31
Hosea, 145, 200
human body/flesh, 88–90, 96, 211–212, 214–217

humiliation of rival, 27
humility of disciple, writing to demonstrate, 129–133

Iamblichus, 131–133
India, accounts of Jesus in, 253–254
Infancy Gospel of Thomas, 237–239
influence, forgery increasing, 8–9, 31–32
intention to deceive, 25–26, 38–39, 122
Irenaeus, 207, 212, 213, 225–226
Isaiah, 30, 127–128, 145, 146, 162
Israel, king of, 146–147, 224
Issa stories, 252–254

James, book of, 192–198
James, brother of Jesus, 60, 61, 62, 187, 193, 197–199, 203, 205, 206, 209, 213, 234, 236
Jenkins, Jerry, 105
Jeremiah, 145
Jerome, 21
Jerusalem's destruction, 56–57, 59, 68, 149–150
Jesus: and the adulterous woman, 160, 242; birth of, 89, 235–236, 239; bringing the sword, 143; childhood miracle accounts, 236–239; divine revelation through, 7; docetists views of, 53–54, 57, 59–60, 86, 89; early church schisms and, 61–63, 182, 183; as engaging in homosexuality, 261; in forged apocalypse, 18; Gnostic views of, 96, 182, 210, 211–212, 214; Golden Rule, 265; in *Gospel of Nicodemus,* 150–152, 172–173; James's relationship to, 193–194; as Jewish messiah, 145–149, 224–225; "lost years" stories, 252–254; as misinterpreted, 87; in modern-day hoaxes, 252–254, 259–261; pagan views of, 166, 169; and Paul's conversion, 79–81, 191–192,

202; questioned about the afterlife, 64–65; salvation through, 61, 81, 85, 99, 100, 109–111, 200; in the Sibylline oracles, 175–176; teachings in Gnostic forgeries, 161, 212–215; transfiguration of, 68–69; as truth, 3; as vegetarian, 259; writings attributed to, 8, 18, 31, 159–163. *See also* second coming beliefs
Jesus, crucifixion of: blaming Jews for the, 55–57, 148, 149–152, 163, 171; *Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness, The,* 254–256; Gnostic account of, 213–214; Pilate's *Death Sentence* hoax, 257–258; Roman Empire in accounts of, 55–58, 151, 152, 156. *See also* Pilate Gospels
Jesus, resurrection of: account in *Gospel of Peter,* 17, 57–59; adding to the account in Mark, 242–243; as of the flesh, 211–212, 217; in *Gospel of Nicodemus,* 152; modern forgery discounting, 254–256
Jesus Seminar, 246
Jewish/Christian conflicts, 145–159; alleged cover-up of Jesus's resurrection, 58, 59; blaming Jews for crucifixion, 55–57, 148–152, 163, 171; Christian forgeries in answer to, 149–152, 163, 177; Jewish reaction to Christian claims, 145–149, 176–177; maligning Judaism in *Barnabas,* 149, 229–231. *See also* Pilate Gospels
Jewish law and Christians: *Barnabas* discrediting, 149, 230; early church schism over, 60–63, 181, 218; forgeries addressing, 109–110, 112, 189–190, 195–198, 203–205, 208; James's commitment to, 193; Marcion's views on, 85, 231–232; Paul on salvation through Jesus over, 80–81, 85, 99, 191, 195–196, 231
Jews/Judaism: apocalyptic writing in, 29–30; king of Israel, 146–147, 224; linking Gospels with, 224–225; literacy and language skills, 72–75; pagan views of, 165, 169; as united with Gentile Christians, 109; varied messianic beliefs, 146–147; writing forgeries to support, 28–29, 174–175

John, Apostle (son of Zebedee), 21, 23, 227, 229
John, author of Revelation, 21, 23
John, Gospel of, 9, 10, 23, 56, 150, 160, 162, 193, 223–229, 242, 244, 250
John the Baptist, 153, 154
Jonah, 42
Joseph, husband of Mary, 234–239
Joseph of Arimathea, 255
Josephus, 27, 40, 73
Joshua, 86, 224
Jude, 21, 69, 186–188, 247–248
Judges, 224
justification of forgery. *See* scholarly justification of forgery
Justin Martyr, 149, 169, 176, 225, 226
Justus of Tiberius, 73

knowledge of the divine, 96, 210, 211, 214, 215
Kujau, Konrad, 13, 14, 15, 26

LaHaye, Timothy, 105
last days. *See* second coming beliefs
Late, Great Planet Earth, The (Lindsey), 105
Left Behind series (Jenkins and LaHaye), 105
Letter of Aristeas, 28–29, 67
Letter of Herod to Pilate, 153–155
Letter of Pilate to Claudius, 155–156
Letter of Pilate to Herod, 154–155
Letters of Paul and Seneca, 18, 90–92, 114, 171
libraries, ancient, 26–27
lies and deceptions: ancient views on, 41–42; beyond literary forgery, 219–220, 249–250; Christianity's legacy of, 40–42,

261–265; falsifications, 240–245; forgery as, 9, 10, 25, 36, 37–38, 40; George Washington illustration, 44–45; "noble/medicinal lie," 41, 42, 263; nuances of falsehood, 45–46; plagiarism, 220, 245–249; to promote "truth," 144, 216, 217, 218, 250, 265. *See also* early Christian forgery; fabrications; false attribution; modern forgeries and hoaxes
Lindsey, Hal, 105
literary genre, 46
Long-Lost Second Book of Acts, 258–259
Longinus, 154, 155
Lucian of Samosata, 28, 48
Luke, Gospel of, 23, 55, 86–87, 206, 220–221, 223, 225–228, 239, 248
Luke the physician, 206–209
Luther, Martin, 196
lying. *See* lies and deceptions

MacDonald, Dennis, 103, 104
Marcion, 84–89, 104, 182, 211, 216, 231–232
Marcion's canon, 86–87
Marcus Aurelius, 134, 136, 137, 167
Mark, Gospel of, 23, 55, 57, 70, 223–228, 242–244, 248, 250, 260–261
marriage, 18, 82–83, 94, 99–100, 103–104, 105
Martial, 29, 37, 39, 247
Mary, mother of Jesus, 89, 234–239, 258–259
Mary Magdalene, 17, 259
Matthew ("Matthaias"), 215
Matthew, Gospel of, 9, 10, 23, 24, 55–58, 63, 69, 143, 151–152, 162, 193, 223–228, 239, 248
Maximin Daia, 173
Meade, David, 126–127, 129

"medicinal lie," 41, 42, 263
Melito, 149
messianic claims, 145–149, 224–225
Metzger, Bruce, 4, 123
Micah, 145
military forgeries, 27
Minucius Felix, 167–168
miracles: accounts of Jesus's childhood, 236–239; in forgeries about Peter, 49–52, 62; of Jesus, 152, 156, 157, 158, 172
misattribution, 24, 140, 221–222, 249–250
modern forgeries and hoaxes, 252–261; *The Confession of Pontius Pilate,* 259; *The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness,* 254–256; *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve,* 259; *Long-Lost Second Book of Acts,* 258–259; *The Passover Plot,* 260; Pilate's *Death Sentence,* 256–258; Smith's "Secret Gospel" of Mark, 260–261; *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ,* 252–254
Moody Bible Institute, 2, 3, 5
Moses, 229–230
motivation for forgery, 25–32; credibility and being heard, 8–9, 31–32; defending religion, 28–29; humiliation of rival, 27, 29; inspiring hope by apocalypse, 29–31; and intention, 25–26, 38–39, 122; political or military ends, 27–28; profit, 15, 26–27; pulling a ruse, 15–17, 27
Müller, Max, 254
Muratorian Canon, 87–88
mythology, 45, 233

Nag Hammadi library, 161, 212–213, 215
Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea, 161
Natural History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth (Venturini), 256
Nero, Emperor, 67, 68, 70, 91, 92, 155

New Testament: anonymous works of the, 10, 23, 220, 229; *Apocalypse of Peter* and, 63–64; containing fabrications, 239–240; discrepancies in, 5; falsifications in the, 242–245; forged out of conflict, 183; four literary genres, 17; overview on forgeries in, 9–10, 65–70, 118, 262. *See also* canonical Gospels
Nicodemus, 255
"noble lie," 41, 42, 263
noncanonical books, 17–19
nothos (illegitimate child), 37, 38, 48
Notovitch, Nicolas, 252–254
Numbers, 115

objective truth, 3–4, 5
Old Testament: apocalypse in, 30; attempts to link Gospels with, 224–225; *Barnabas* on broken Jewish covenant, 149, 229–231; deception by God in, 42; forgeries in the, 117, 126–128, 131; Marcion rejecting the, 85–89, 231–232; on the messiah, 145–149; Septuagint, 67, 75, 76; varied early church views on, 182
Onomacritus of Athens, 39
Origen, 42, 169, 234
orthonymous writing, 22–23

pagans, 163–176; beliefs of, 6, 164–165; as bowing to Jesus, 151, 237; Christian forgeries to fend off, 145, 170–173, 177–178; converting to Christianity, 169–170, 202; opposition to Christians, 67, 145, 165–170, 177; and the Sibylline oracles, 173–176
Palestine, 72
Papias, 226–227
Parthenopaeus (play; Dionysius), 16–17, 27

Passover Plot, The (Schonfield), 260
pastoral letter forgeries, 93–105; absent from Marcion's canon, 86–87; 1 and 2 Timothy copyist view, 97–98; first scholarly suspicions about, 95–96; Harrison's statistics of word usage, 98; looking at historical context, 100–102; overview on, 93–97; possible reasons for, 103–105; and reactualizing the tradition, 128–129; verisimilitude in 1 and 2 Timothy, 102–103; word comparisons, 99–100, 278n14
Paul, Apostle: as aligned with Peter, 199–204, 209; ancient fabrications about, 81–83, 155; associating *Barnabas* with, 231–232; attribution of Luke and, 228; authentic letters by, 22–23, 93; beliefs on the flesh, 90; coauthoring by, 77, 114; controversy surrounding / opposition to, 60–63, 180–182, 188–189, 199–202; conversion of, 79–81, 191–192, 202; death of, 70, 92; on faith, 99, 195–198; falsification of writings of, 244–245; forgeries in support of, 87, 199–202; forgery of Jesus writing to, 161; linked to sexual abstinence teachings, 18, 82, 103–105, 233; modern fictions of, 79–81, 258; Peter and authority of, 190–192, 206; philosophers linked with, 18, 91–92; salvation through Jesus over Jewish law, 80–81, 85, 99, 191, 195–196, 231; second coming beliefs of, 90, 99–102, 106–108, 110–111. *See also* Acts of the Apostles
Paul, forgeries in opposition to, 188–198; book of James, 192–198; noncanonical *Epistle of Peter,* 189–190; overview, 188–189; the *Pseudo-Clementine Writings,* 190–192
Pauline forgeries, 84–93; *Apocalypse of Paul,* 213; Colossians, 112–114, 129–130, 185; deutero-Pauline letters, 92–93; as disciples writing in name of Paul, 129–133; Ephesians, 108–112, 129–130, 143–144; Hebrews, 22, 221; *Letters of Paul and Seneca,* 18, 90–92, 114, 171; overview on New Testament, 92–93, 188; perpetrated by Marcion, 84–88; scholars' reluctance to label forgeries, 118, 119; 2 Thessalonians, 19–21,

105–108, 120; secretary hypothesis and, 108, 114, 134–135; 3 Corinthians, 88–90, 216. *See also* pastoral letter forgeries
Pausanias, 29
pen names, 23–24
persecution, 66–67
Peter, Apostle: in *Acts of Peter and Paul,* 155; *Acts of Peter* fabrication, 18, 50–52, 233; ancient literacy and education, 70–73; attribution of Mark and, 223, 226, 227, 228; authority and Paul, 190–192, 206; death under Nero, 68, 70; forgeries aligning Paul with, 199–204, 209; forgery of Jesus writing to, 161; Gentile Christians and Jewish law, 60–63, 189–190, 203, 204; as illiterate, 75, 138; miracles allegedly performed by, 49–52, 62; possibility of Greek proficiency, 73–75, 138–139; stories about, 49–52; supposedly appointing Clement, 222
Petrine forgeries, 52–70; *Apocalypse of Peter,* 18, 30, 63–65; *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter,* 213–214; as disciples writing in name of Peter, 131–133; early church schism and, 60–63; *Epistle of Peter,* 62–63; 1 and 2 Peter, 65–70, 75–77, 199–202; and the secretary hypothesis, 118, 134–139. *See also Gospel of Peter*
Philemon, 93, 200, 207
Philippians, 80, 81, 93, 110, 113
philosophers: associating Paul with, 18, 91–92; converting to Christianity, 169–170; forgeries of works by, 26–27, 37; on lying, 41; plagiarism by, 247; story of Dionysius, 16; theory of disciples writing in name of, 129–133
Pilate Gospels, 152–159; *Handing Over of Pilate,* 157–159; *Letter of Herod to Pilate,* 153–155; *Letter of Pilate to Claudius,* 155–156; *Letter of Pilate to Herod,* 154–155; overview on, 152–153; purpose of, 159, 171; *Report of Pontius Pilate,* 156–157, 158
plagiarism, 220, 245–249
Plato, 26, 27, 31, 37, 39, 41, 42, 71

Plutarch, 34, 39, 269n13
poetry, epic tragic, 45–46, 48
political forgeries, 27–28
Polybius, 48, 246
polytheistic religions, 6
Pontius Pilate, 3, 55–56, 58, 150–153, 169, 172–173, 257–258, 259. *See also* Pilate Gospels
Porphyry, 130, 131
Procla, 154–155
profit motive, 15, 26–27
Proto-Gospel of James, 234–236, 248
Psalms, 145, 146, 236
pseudepigraphal writing, 24–25. *See also* forgery, literary
Pseudo-Clementine Writings, 62–63, 190–192
pseudonymous writing, 23–24, 140
pseudos (falsehood), 37–38
Pythagoras, 130–133, 247

Rahab, 42
rapture beliefs, 105–106
reactualizing tradition, 125–129
Reed, Jonathan, 74
reincarnation, 258–259
religion, ancient, 5–7
religious conflict, 143–145, 176–178
religious forgery, 28–29
Report of Pontius Pilate, 156–157, 158
resurrection of Jesus. *See* Jesus, resurrection of
resurrection of the faithful. *See* second coming beliefs
Revelation, 21, 30, 64, 105
Rhossus congregation, 53–54
Richards, E. Randolph, 134–138

Roman Empire: Christianity unique in, 6–7; consulting Sibylline oracles, 173–174; destruction of Jerusalem, 56–57, 68, 149–150; and Jesus's trial and crucifixion, 55–58, 151, 152, 156; lack of records on Jesus, 256–257; literacy in, 72–73; Paul unknown in, 91; treatment of Christians in, 67, 163–164; use of secretaries, 134–138
romances, 45–46
Romans, book of, 86, 93, 99, 134, 138, 200
Rome, 68, 92

Salome, 235
salvation: Gnostic transcendence of the flesh, 96, 211, 214; through Jesus, 61, 81, 85, 99, 100, 109–111, 200
Salvian, 31–33, 262
Sarah, 42
Schleiermacher, Friedrich, 95–96
scholarly justification of forgery, 119–140; coauthoring theories, 77, 114, 136–137; disciples writing as act of humility, 129–133; nondeceptive intent view, 119–123, 126; overview on, 118, 139–140; pseudepigraphy in the Spirit, 123–125; reactualizing the tradition, 125–129. *See also* secretary hypothesis
Schonfield, Hugh, 260
scribes, 87, 240–244, 250
scribes, forgeries by. *See* secretary hypothesis
second coming beliefs: docetist, 89; Gnostic, 211–212; messianic predictions and, 148; mocked by scoffers, 69–70; modern rapture beliefs, 105–106; Paul's views, 90, 99–102, 106–108, 110–111; as spiritual / already occurring, 111, 112, 113
2 Corinthians, 93
2 John, 23, 221, 223, 229
2 Kings, 86, 224 2

Peter, 21–22, 68–70, 75, 76, 127, 128, 131, 134, 135, 138, 201–202, 204, 247–248, 275n23
2 Samuel, 224 2
Thessalonians, 19–21, 22, 35, 37, 105–108, 120
2 Timothy, 22, 86, 93–98, 102–103, 115, 188
Second Treatise of the Great Seth, 161
Secret Book of John, 213
Secret Gospel of Mark, 27, 260–261
secretary hypothesis, 133–139; arguments against, 138–139; four uses of secretaries theory, 135–138; overview of, 133–134; and Pauline/Petrine forgeries, 108, 114, 134–139
self-knowledge, 96, 210, 211, 215
Seneca, 18, 91–92, 114, 171
Septuagint, 67, 75, 76
Serapion, 53, 54, 57, 59–60, 233
sexual abstinence teachings: apologists supporting, 170; divided views on, 82–83, 103–105; in forgeries about Peter, 49–50; forgers linking to Paul, 18, 82, 103–105, 233; of the Gnostics, 96
Sibylline oracles, 173–176
Silvanus, 76, 200
Simon Peter. *See* Peter, Apostle
Simon the Magician, 50–52, 62, 88, 89, 155, 160, 190, 191, 217, 233
Smith, Morton, 27, 260–261, 269n16
Socrates, 41, 71, 247
Solomon, 117
Sophocles, 16, 26
Speyer, Wolfgang, 40, 123
Spirit-inspired forgery, 123–125
Spirit of God, 100–101
spiritual battle, 144
Stern (magazine), 13, 14

Stoics, 16
stories, true. *See* true stories
subjectivity, 3
submissiveness in women, 83, 94, 103–104, 172, 244
suffering, 53–54, 57, 59–60, 66–67

techniques of forgers, 19–20, 33–35
Tertius, 134
Tertullian, 18, 83, 84, 156, 165–166, 169, 212, 213, 221–222, 233, 270n24
Thecla, 81, 82–83, 103, 104, 105, 262
Theopompus, 29
3 Corinthians, 88–90, 216
3 John, 23, 221, 223, 229
Thomas, Judas Didymus, 213, 215
Thucydides, 47, 48
Tiberius, Emperor, 155, 156, 158, 259
Tibetan Issa stories, 252–254
Timothy to the Church (Salvian), 32–33, 262
Tiro, 137
Titus, 49–50, 86, 93, 95, 96, 99, 101, 102, 103, 115, 188, 197
tradition, reactualizing, 125–129
tragic poetry, 45–46, 48
transfiguration scene, 68–69
Trevor-Roper, Hugh, 13, 14
true stories, 43–49; ancient historical writing, 47–49; ancient notions of fiction, 45–48; and falsehood, 45; George Washington illustration, 44–45; nature of, 43–44
truth: apostolic truth, 7–8; Christianity's truth claims, 5–7; as complex, 43; evangelical Christians' commitment to, 3–5; objective truth, 3–4; reconciling Christianity with, 4–5; use of falsehoods to promote, 144, 216, 217, 218, 250, 265

truth claims, 5–7, 44–45

Unknown Life of Jesus Christ, The, 252–254

vegetarianism, 259
Venturini, K. H., 256
verisimilitude, 34–35, 102–103
virgin birth story, 235–236
Vitruvius, 246

Washington, George, 44–45
Weems, Mason Locke, 44
women in the church, 82–83, 94, 100, 103–105, 172, 244–245
works, 99, 110, 194–198
writing: ancient literacy and, 70–73; biography, 46, 47; epic poetry, 45–46, 48; fabrication, 232; falsifications, 240–242; historical writing, 44–45, 47–49, 232–234; homonymous writing, 23; literary genre, 46; notions of fiction, 45–48; orthonymous writing, 22–23; plagiarism, 220, 245–249; pseudepigraphal writing, 24–25; pseudonymous writing, 23–24. *See also* anonymous writing; forgery, literary; scholarly justification of forgery; secretary hypothesis; true stories

Xenophon, 41

Zechariah, 145

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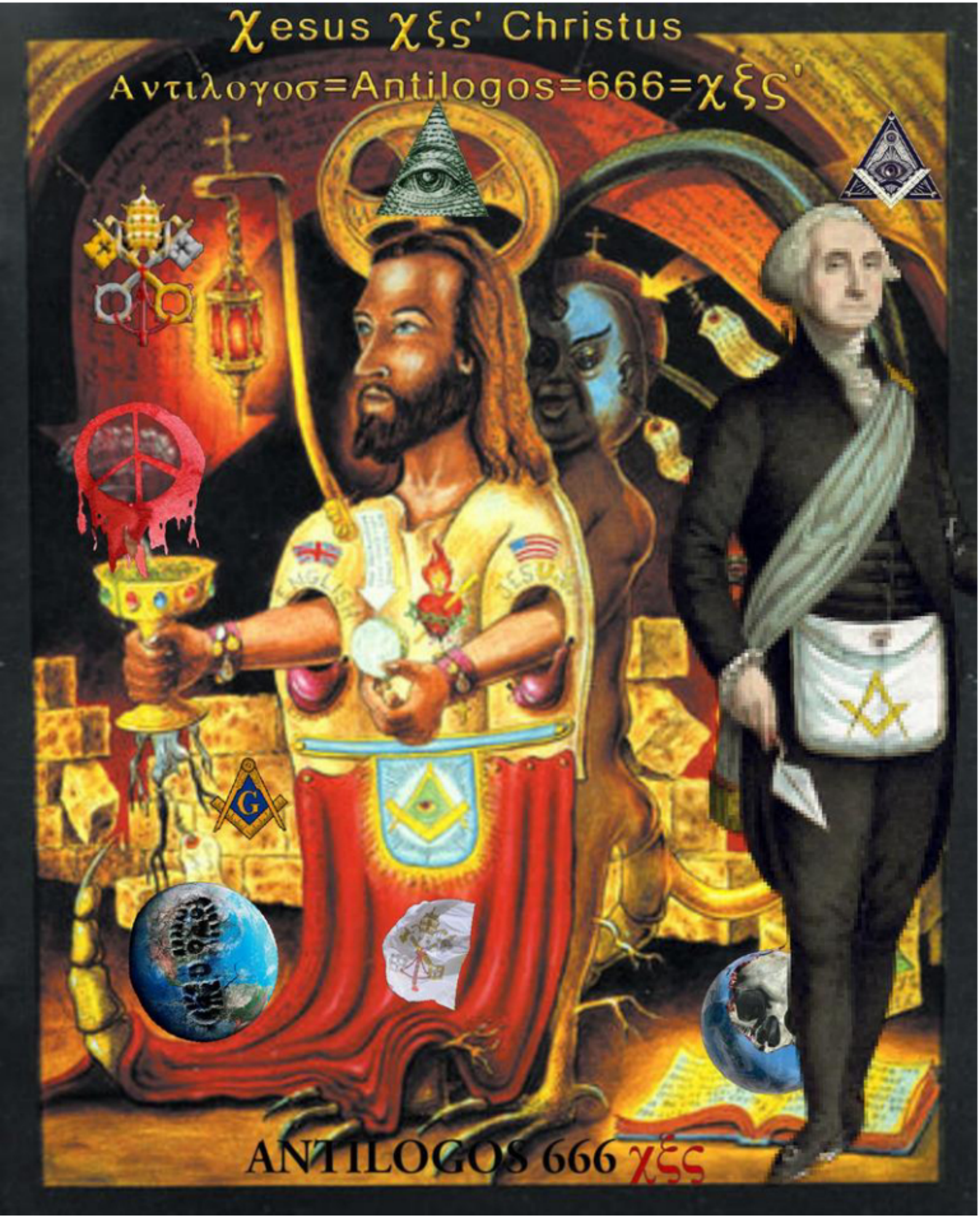
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